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THE WORKS
OF
EDMUND BURKE
I
THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS

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BURKE'S WORKS

I. THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS

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Thoughts on the Cause
of the
Present Discontents

*Together with Observations on a Late
Publication intituled 'The Present
State of the Nation'*

By
EDMUND BURKE



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NOTE

THE pamphlet on 'The Present Discontents' was issued by Edmund Burke (1729 to 1797) in April, 1770; the 'Observations' on the important anonymous publication, 'The Present State of the Nation', were published in 1769, and will be found to supplement the more famous monograph of the following year.

In the present edition Burke's notes are retained, and are indicated in the text by asterisks (*), additions to the same being enclosed in square brackets []. The present editor's notes are indicated by numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).

G. R. & S. Ld.

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THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS

Hoc vero occultum, intestinum, domesticum malum, non modo non existit, verum etiam opprimit, antequam perspicere atque explorare potueris.—Cic.

It is an undertaking of some degree of delicacy to examine into the cause of public disorders. If a man happens not to succeed in such an inquiry, he will be thought weak and visionary; if he touches the true grievance, there is a danger that he may come near to persons of weight and consequence¹, who will rather be exasperated at the discovery of their errors, than thankful for the occasion of correcting them. If he should be obliged to blame the favourites of the people², he will be considered as the tool of power; if he censures those in power, he will be looked on as an instrument of faction. But in all exertions of duty something is to be hazarded. In cases of tumult and disorder, our law has invested every man, in some sort, with the authority of a magistrate. When the affairs of the nation are distracted, private people are, by the spirit of that law, justified in stepping a little out of their ordinary sphere.

¹ E.g. the King (George III).

² E.g. William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham (1708–78).

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They enjoy a privilege, of somewhat more dignity and effect, than that of idle lamentation over the calamities of their country. They may look into them narrowly; they may reason upon them liberally; and if they should be so fortunate as to discover the true source of the mischief, and to suggest any probable method of removing it, though they may displease the rulers for the day, they are certainly of service to the cause of government. Government is deeply interested in everything which, even through the medium of some temporary uneasiness, may tend finally to compose the minds of the subject, and to conciliate their affections. I have nothing to do here with the abstract value of the voice of the people. But as long as reputation, the most precious possession of every individual, and as long as opinion, the great support of the state, depend entirely upon that voice, it can never be considered as a thing of little consequence either to individuals or to governments. Nations are not primarily ruled by laws: less by violence. Whatever original energy may be supposed either in force or regulation, the operation of both is, in truth, merely instrumental. Nations are governed by the same methods, and on the same principles, by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or his superiors; by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it; I mean—when public affairs are steadily and quietly conducted; not when government is nothing but a continued scuffle between the magistrate and the multitude; in which sometimes the one and sometimes the other is uppermost; in which they alternately yield and prevail, in a series of contemptible victories, and scandalous submissions.

The temper of the people amongst whom he presides ought therefore to be the first study of a statesman. And the knowledge of this temper it is by no means impossible for him to attain, if he has not an interest in being ignorant of what it is his duty to learn.

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind; indeed the necessary effects of the ignorance and levity of the vulgar. Such complaints and humours have existed in all times; yet as all times have *not* been alike, true political sagacity manifests itself in distinguishing that complaint which only characterizes the general infirmity of human nature, from those which are symptoms of the particular distemperature of our own air and season.

Nobody, I believe, will consider it merely as the language of spleen or disappointment, if I say, that there is something particularly alarming in the present conjuncture. There is hardly a man, in or out of power, who holds any other language. That government is at once dreaded and contemned; that the laws are despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors; that their inaction is a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence; that rank, and office and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world, have lost their reverence and effect; that our foreign politics are as much deranged as our domestic economy; that our dependencies are slackened in their affection, and loosened from their obedience; that we know neither how to yield nor how to enforce; that hardly anything above or below, abroad or at home, is sound and entire; but that disconnection and

confusion, in offices, in parties, in families¹, in Parliament, in the nation prevail beyond the disorders of any former time: these are facts universally admitted and lamented.

This state of things is the more extraordinary, because the great parties² which formerly divided and agitated the kingdom are known to be in a manner entirely dissolved. No great external calamity has visited the nation; no pestilence or famine. We do not labour at present under any scheme of taxation new or oppressive in the quantity or in the mode. Nor are we engaged in unsuccessful war; in which our misfortunes might easily pervert our judgment; and our minds, sore from the loss of national glory, might feel every blow of fortune as a crime in government.

It is impossible that the cause of this strange distemper should not sometimes become a subject of discourse. It is a compliment due, and [one] which I willingly pay, to those who administer our affairs, to take notice in the first place of their speculation. Our ministers are of opinion, that the increase of our trade and manufactures, that our growth by colonization, and by conquest, have concurred to accumulate immense wealth in the hands of some individuals; and this again being dispersed among the people, has rendered them universally proud, ferocious, and ungovernable; that the insolence of some from their enormous wealth, and the boldness of others from a guilty poverty, have rendered them capable of the most

¹ Referring particularly to Lord Temple and his brother, George Grenville, and his brother-in-law, Lord Chatam.

² Whigs and Tories: the political combinations were shifting.

atrocious attempts; so that they have trampled upon all subordination, and violently borne down the unarmed laws of a free government; barriers too feeble against the fury of a populace so fierce and licentious as ours. They contend, that no adequate provocation has been given for so spreading a discontent; our affairs having been conducted throughout with remarkable temper and consummate wisdom. The wicked industry of some libellers¹, joined to the intrigues of a few disappointed politicians, have, in their opinion, been able to produce this unnatural ferment in the nation.

Nothing indeed can be more unnatural than the present convulsions of this country, if the above account be a true one. I confess I shall assent to it with great reluctance, and only on the compulsion of the clearest and firmest proofs; because their account resolves itself into this short, but discouraging proposition, 'That we have a very good ministry, but that we are a very bad people'; that we set ourselves to bite the hand that feeds us; that with a malignant insanity, we oppose the measures, and ungratefully vilify the persons, of those whose sole object is our own peace and prosperity. If a few puny libellers, acting under a knot of factious politicians, without virtue, parts, or character (such they are constantly represented by these gentlemen), are sufficient to excite this disturbance, very perverse must be the disposition of that people, amongst whom such a disturbance can be excited by such means. It is besides no small aggravation of the public misfortune, that the disease, on this hypothesis, appears to be without remedy. If the wealth of the nation be

¹ The letters of Junius had been started in the previous year.

the cause of its turbulence, I imagine it is not proposed to introduce poverty, as a constable to keep the peace. If our dominions abroad are the roots which feed all this rank luxuriance of sedition, it is not intended to cut them off in order to famish the fruit. If our liberty has enfeebled the executive power, there is no design, I hope, to call in the aid of despotism, to fill up the deficiencies of law. Whatever may be intended, these things are not yet professed. We seem therefore to be driven to absolute despair ; for we have no other materials to work upon, but those out of which God has been pleased to form the inhabitants of this island. If these be radically and essentially vicious, all that can be said is, that those men are very unhappy, to whose fortune or duty it falls to administer the affairs of this untoward people. I hear it indeed sometimes asserted, that a steady perseverance in the present measures, and a rigorous punishment of those who oppose them, will in course of time infallibly put an end to these disorders. But this, in my opinion, is said without much observation of our present disposition, and without any knowledge at all of the general nature of mankind. If the matter of which this nation is composed be so very fermentable as these gentlemen describe it, heaven never will be wanting to work it up, as long as discontent, revenge, and ambition, have existence in the world. Particular punishments are the cure for accidental distempers in the state ; they inflame rather than allay those heats which arise from the settled mismanagement of the government, or from a natural indisposition in the people. It is of the utmost moment not to make mistakes in the use of strong measures ; and firmness is then only a virtue when it accom-

panies the most perfect wisdom. In truth, inconstancy is a sort of natural corrective of folly and ignorance.

I am not one of those who think that the people are never in the wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and in this. But I do say, that in all disputes between them and their rulers, the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people. Experience may perhaps justify me in going further. When popular discontents have been very prevalent, it may well be affirmed and supported, that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, and not their crime. But with the governing part of the state, it is far otherwise. They certainly may act ill by design, as well as by mistake. '*Les révolutions qui arrivent dans les grands états ne sont point un effet du hazard, ni du caprice des peuples. Rien ne révolte les grands d'un royaume comme un gouvernement foible et dérangé. Pour la populace, ce n'est jamais par envie d'attaquer qu'elle se soulève, mais par impatience de souffrir*'*. These are the words of a great man; of a minister of state; and a zealous assertor of monarchy. They are applied to the *system of favouritism* which was adopted by Henry the Third of France, and to the dreadful consequences it produced. What he says of revolutions, is equally true of all great disturbances. If this presumption in favour of the subjects against the trustees of power be not the more probable, I am sure it is the more comfortable speculation; because it is

* *Mém. de Sully*, tom. i. p. 133.

more easy to change an administration, than to reform a people.

Upon a supposition, therefore, that, in the opening of the cause, the presumptions stand equally balanced between the parties, there seems sufficient ground to entitle any person to a fair hearing, who attempts some other scheme beside that easy one which is fashionable in some fashionable companies, to account for the present discontents. It is not to be argued that we endure no grievance, because our grievances are not of the same sort with those under which we laboured formerly; not precisely those which we bore from the Tudors, or vindicated on the Stuarts. A great change has taken place in the affairs of this country. For in the silent lapse of events as material alterations have been insensibly brought about in the policy and character of governments and nations, as those which have been marked by the tumult of public revolutions.

It is very rare indeed for men to be wrong in their feelings concerning public misconduct; as rare to be right in their speculation upon the cause of it. I have constantly observed, that the generality of people are fifty years, at least, behindhand in their politics. There are but very few who are capable of comparing and digesting what passes before their eyes at different times and occasions, so as to form the whole into a distinct system. But in books everything is settled for them, without the exertion of any considerable diligence or sagacity. For which reason men are wise with but little reflection, and good with little self-denial, in the business of all times except their own. We are very uncorrupt and tolerably enlightened judges of the transactions of past ages; where no passions

deceive, and where the whole train of circumstances, from the trifling cause to the tragical event, is set in an orderly series before us. Few are the partisans of departed tyranny; and to be a Whig on the business of an hundred years ago is very consistent with every advantage of present servility. This retrospective wisdom, and historical patriotism, are things of wonderful convenience, and serve admirably to reconcile the old quarrel between speculation and practice. Many a stern republican, after gorging himself with a full feast of admiration of the Grecian commonwealths and of our true Saxon constitution, and discharging all the splendid bile of his virtuous indignation on King John and King James, sits down perfectly satisfied to the coarsest work and homeliest job of the day he lives in. I believe there was no professed admirer of Henry the Eighth among the instruments of the last King James; nor in the court of Henry the Eighth was there, I dare say, to be found a single advocate for the favourites of Richard the Second.

No complaisance to our court, or to our age, can make me believe nature to be so changed, but that public liberty will be among us as among our ancestors, obnoxious to some person or other; and that opportunities will be furnished for attempting, at least, some alteration to the prejudice of our constitution. These attempts will naturally vary in their mode according to times and circumstances. For ambition, though it has ever the same general views, has not at all times the same means, nor the same particular objects. A great deal of the furniture of ancient tyranny is worn to rags; the rest is entirely out of fashion. Besides, there are few statesmen so very clumsy and awkward in their business, as to fall into the identical

snare which has proved fatal to their predecessors. When an arbitrary imposition is attempted upon the subject, undoubtedly it will not bear on its forehead the name of *Ship-money*. There is no danger that an extension of the *Forest laws*¹ should be the chosen mode of oppression in this age. And when we hear any instance of ministerial rapacity, to the prejudice of the rights of private life, it will certainly not be the exaction of two hundred pullets, from a woman of fashion, for leave to lie with her own husband*.

Every age has its own manners, and its politics dependent upon them; and the same attempts will not be made against a constitution fully formed and matured, that were used to destroy it in the cradle, or to resist its growth during its infancy.

Against the being of Parliament, I am satisfied, no designs have ever been entertained since the Revolution. Every one must perceive, that it is strongly the interest of the court, to have some second cause interposed between the ministers and the people. The gentlemen of the House of Commons have an interest equally strong in sustaining the part of that intermediate cause. However they may hire out the *usufruct* of their voices, they never will part with the *fee and inheritance*. Accordingly those³ who have been of the most known devotion to the will and pleasure of a court have, at the same time, been most forward in asserting a high authority in the House of Commons.

¹ Under Charles I.

* Uxor Hugonis de Nevill dat Domino Regi ducentas gallinas, eo quod possit jacere una nocte cum Domino suo Hugone de Nevill.—Maddox, *Hist. Ech.* xiii. 326.

³ Referring particularly to Jeremiah, nicknamed 'Mungo,' Dyson (1722-76).

When they knew who were to use that authority, and how it was to be employed, they thought it never could be carried too far. It must be always the wish of an unconstitutional statesman, that a House of Commons, who are entirely dependent upon him, should have every right of the people entirely dependent upon their pleasure. It was soon discovered, that the forms of a free, and the ends of an arbitrary government, were things not altogether incompatible.

The power of the Crown, almost dead and rotten as Prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength, and far less odium, under the name of Influence. An influence, which operated without noise and without violence; an influence, which converted the very antagonist into the instrument of power; which contained in itself a perpetual principle of growth and renovation: and which the distresses and the prosperity of the country equally tended to augment, was an admirable substitute for a prerogative, that, being only the offspring of antiquated prejudices, had moulded in its original stamina irresistible principles of decay and dissolution. The ignorance of the people is a bottom but for a temporary system; the interest of active men in the state is a foundation perpetual and infallible. However, some circumstances, arising, it must be confessed, in a great degree from accident, prevented the effects of this influence for a long time from breaking out in a manner capable of exciting any serious apprehensions. Although government was strong and flourished exceedingly, the *court* had drawn far less advantage than one would imagine from this great source of power.

At the Revolution, the Crown, deprived, for the

ends of the Revolution itself, of many prerogatives, was found too weak to struggle against all the difficulties which pressed so new and unsettled a government. The Court was obliged therefore to delegate a part of its powers to men of such interest as could support, and of such fidelity as would adhere to, its establishment. Such men were able to draw in a greater number to a concurrence in the common defence. This connection, necessary at first, continued long after convenient; and properly conducted might indeed, in all situations, be an useful instrument of government. At the same time, through the intervention of men of popular weight and character, the people possessed a security for their just proportion of importance in the state. But as the title to the crown grew stronger by long possession, and by the constant increase of its influence, these helps have of late seemed to certain persons no better than incumbrances. The powerful managers for government were not sufficiently submissive to the pleasure of the possessors of immediate and personal favour, sometimes from a confidence in their own strength, natural and acquired; sometimes from a fear of offending their friends, and weakening that lead in the country which gave them a consideration independent of the court. Men acted as if the court could receive, as well as confer, an obligation. The influence of government, thus divided in appearance between the court and the leaders of parties, became in many cases an accession rather to the popular than to the royal scale; and some part of that influence, which would otherwise have been possessed as in a sort of mortmain and unalienable domain, returned again to the great ocean from whence it arose, and circulated among the people. This method, there-

fore, of governing by men of great natural interest or great acquired consideration was viewed in a very invidious light by the true lovers of absolute monarchy. It is the nature of despotism to abhor power held by any means but its own momentary pleasure; and to annihilate all intermediate situations between boundless strength on its own part, and total debility on the part of the people.

To get rid of all this intermediate and independent importance, and *to secure to the court the unlimited and uncontrolled use of its own vast influence, under the sole direction of its own private favour*, has for some years past been the great object of policy. If this were compassed, the influence of the Crown must of course produce all the effects which the most sanguine partisans of the court could possibly desire. Government might then be carried on without any concurrence on the part of the people: without any attention to the dignity of the greater, or to the affections of the lower sorts. A new project was therefore devised by a certain set of intriguing men, totally different from the system of administration which had prevailed since the accession of the House of Brunswick. This project, I have heard, was first conceived by some persons in the court of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

The earliest attempt in the execution of this design was to set up for minister, a person ¹, in rank

¹ John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute (1713-92). He is the subject of the reference just above to 'some persons in the court of Frederick, Prince of Wales.' He was a master of political intrigue, retaining the confidence of George III, while he worked against the Prime Minister, Grenville. Lord Bute married the only daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montague. He had been suspected of accepting bribes from France, and Burke's reference

indeed respectable, and very ample in fortune; but who, to the moment of this vast and sudden elevation, was little known or considered in the kingdom. To him the whole nation was to yield an immediate and implicit submission. But whether it was from want of firmness to bear up against the first opposition; or that things were not yet fully ripened, or that this method was not found the most eligible; that idea was soon abandoned. The instrumental part of the project was a little altered, to accommodate it to the time and to bring things more gradually and more surely to the one great end proposed.

The first part of the reformed plan was to draw *a line which should separate the court from the ministry*. Hitherto these names had been looked upon as synonymous; but for the future, court and administration were to be considered as things totally distinct. By this operation, two systems of administration were to be formed; one which should be in the real secret and confidence; the other merely ostensible to perform the official and executory duties of government. The latter were alone to be responsible; whilst the real advisers, who enjoyed all the power, were effectually removed from all the danger.

Secondly, *A party under these leaders was to be formed in favour of the court against the ministry*: this party was to have a large share in the emoluments of government, and to hold it totally separate from, and independent of, ostensible administration.

The third point, and that on which the success of the whole scheme ultimately depended, was *to bring Parliament to an acquiescence in this project*.

to his 'very ample' fortune is possibly intended to repudiate a share in this probably quite unjust suspicion.

Parliament was therefore to be taught by degrees a total indifference to the persons, rank, influence, abilities, connections, and character of the ministers of the Crown. By means of a discipline, on which I shall say more hereafter, that body was to be habituated to the most opposite interests, and the most discordant politics. All connections and dependencies among subjects were to be entirely dissolved. As, hitherto, business had gone through the hands of leaders of Whigs or Tories, men of talents to conciliate the people, and to engage their confidence; now the method was to be altered; and the lead was to be given to men of no sort of consideration or credit in the country. This want of natural importance was to be their very title to delegated power. Members of Parliament were to be hardened into an insensibility to pride as well as to duty. Those high and haughty sentiments, which are the great support of independence, were to be let down gradually. Points of honour and precedence were no more to be regarded in Parliamentary decorum than in a Turkish army. It was to be avowed, as a constitutional maxim, that the king might appoint one of his footmen, or one of your footmen for minister; and that he ought to be, and that he would be, as well followed as the first name for rank or wisdom in the nation. Thus Parliament was to look on as if perfectly unconcerned, while a cabal of the closet and back-stairs was substituted in the place of a national administration.

With such a degree of acquiescence, any measure of any court might well be deemed thoroughly secure. The capital objects, and by much the most flattering characteristics of arbitrary power, would be obtained. Everything would be drawn

from its holdings in the country to the personal favour and inclination of the prince. This favour would be the sole introduction to power, and the only tenure by which it was to be held ; so that no person looking towards another, and all looking towards the court, it was impossible but that the motive which solely influenced every man's hopes must come in time to govern every man's conduct ; till at last the servility became universal, in spite of the dead letter of any laws or institutions whatsoever.

How it should happen that any man could be tempted to venture upon such a project of government, may at first view appear surprising. But the fact is that opportunities very inviting to such an attempt have offered ; and the scheme itself was not destitute of some arguments, not wholly unpalatable, to recommend it. These opportunities and these arguments, the use that has been made of both, the plan for carrying this new scheme of government into execution, and the effects which it has produced, are, in my opinion, worthy of our serious consideration.

His Majesty came to the throne of these kingdoms with more advantages than any of his predecessors since the Revolution. Fourth in descent, and third in succession of his royal family, even the zealots of hereditary right, in him, saw something to flatter their favourite prejudices ; and to justify a transfer of their attachments, without a change in their principles. The person and cause of the Pretender were become contemptible ; his title disowned throughout Europe ; his party disbanded in England. His Majesty came, indeed, to the inheritance of a mighty war ; but, victorious in every part of the globe, peace was always in his

power, not to negotiate, but to dictate. No foreign habitudes or attachments withdrew him from the cultivation of his power at home. His revenue for the civil establishment, fixed (as it was then thought) at a large, but definite sum¹, was ample without being invidious. His influence, by additions from conquest, by an augmentation of debt, by an increase of military and naval establishment, much strengthened and extended. And coming to the throne in the prime and full vigour of youth, as from affection there was a strong dislike, so from dread there seemed to be a general averseness, from giving anything like offence to a monarch, against whose resentment opposition could not look for a refuge in any sort of reversionary hope.

These singular advantages inspired his Majesty only with a more ardent desire to preserve unimpaired the spirit of that national freedom, to which he owed a situation so full of glory. But to others it suggested sentiments of a very different nature. They thought they now beheld an opportunity (by a certain sort of statesmen never long undiscovered or unemployed) of drawing to themselves by the aggrandizement of a court faction, a degree of power which they could never hope to derive from natural influence or from honourable service; and which it was impossible they could hold with the least security, whilst the system of administration rested upon its former bottom. In order to facilitate the execution of their design, it was necessary to make many alterations in political arrangement, and a signal change in the opinions, habits, and connections of the greatest part of those who at that time acted in public.

In the first place, they proceeded gradually,

¹ £800,000.

but not slowly, to destroy everything of strength which did not derive its principal nourishment from the immediate pleasure of the court. The greatest weight of popular opinion and party connection were then with the Duke of Newcastle and Mr Pitt. Neither of these held their importance by the *new tenure* of the court ; they were not therefore thought to be so proper as others for the services which were required by that tenure. It happened very favourably for the new system, that under a forced coalition there rankled an incurable alienation and disgust between the parties which composed the administration. Mr Pitt was first attacked. Not satisfied with removing him from power, they endeavoured by various artifices to ruin his character. The other party seemed rather pleased to get rid of so oppressive a support ; not perceiving, that their own fall was prepared by his, and involved in it. Many other reasons prevented them from daring to look their true situation in the face. To the great Whig families it was extremely disagreeable, and seemed almost unnatural, to oppose the administration of a prince of the House of Brunswick. Day after day they hesitated, and doubted, and lingered, expecting that other counsels would take place ; and were slow to be persuaded, that all which had been done by the cabal was the effect not of humour, but of system. It was more strongly and evidently the interest of the new court faction, to get rid of the great Whig connections, than to destroy Mr Pitt. The power of that gentleman was vast indeed and merited ; but it was in a great degree personal, and therefore transient. Theirs was rooted in the country. For, with a good deal less of popularity, they possessed a far more natural and fixed influence.

Long possession of government ; vast property ; obligations of favours given and received ; connection of office ; ties of blood, of alliance, of friendship (things at that time supposed of some force) ; the name of Whig, dear to the majority of the people ; the zeal early begun and steadily continued to the royal family : all these together formed a body of power in the nation, which was criminal and devoted. The great ruling principle of the cabal, and that which animated and harmonized all their proceedings, how various soever they may have been, was to signify to the world that the court would proceed upon its own proper forces only ; and that the pretence of bringing any other into its service was an affront to it, and not a support. Therefore when the chiefs were removed, in order to go to the root, the whole party was put under a proscription, so general and severe, as to take their hard-earned bread from the lowest officers, in a manner which had never been known before, even in general revolutions. But it was thought necessary effectually to destroy all dependencies but one ; and to show an example of the firmness and rigour with which the new system was to be supported.

Thus for the time were pulled down, in the persons of the Whig leaders and of Mr Pitt (in spite of the services of the one at the accession of the royal family, and the recent services of the other in the war), *the two only securities for the importance of the people ; power arising from popularity ; and power arising from connection.* Here and there indeed a few individuals were left standing, who gave security for their total estrangement from the odious principles of party connection and personal attachment ; and it must be confessed that most of them have

religiously kept their faith. Such a change could not however be made without a mighty shock to government.

To reconcile the minds of the people to all these movements, principles correspondent to them had been preached up with great zeal. Every one must remember that the cabal set out with the most astonishing prudery, both moral and political. Those, who in a few months after soused over head and ears into the deepest and dirtiest pits of corruption, cried out violently against the indirect practices in the electing and managing of Parliaments, which had formerly prevailed. This marvellous abhorrence which the court had suddenly taken to all influence, was not only circulated in conversation through the kingdom, but pompously announced to the public, with many other extraordinary things, in a pamphlet * which had all the appearance of a manifesto preparatory to some considerable enterprise. Throughout it was a satire, though in terms managed and decent enough, on the politics of the former reign. It was indeed written with no small art and address.

In this piece appeared the first dawning of the new system: there first appeared the idea (then only in speculation) of *separating the court from the administration*; of carrying everything from national connection to personal regards; and of forming a regular party for that purpose, under the name of *king's men*.

To recommend this system to the people, a per-

* *Sentiments of an Honest Man*. [the pamphlet in question, *Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man*, was written (1761) by Sir William Pulteney, 1st Earl of Bath (1684-1764), of whom Walpole said that he 'feared Pulteney's tongue more than another man's sword.']

spective view of the court, gorgeously painted, and finely illuminated from within, was exhibited to the gaping multitude. Party was to be totally done away, with all its evil works. Corruption was to be cast down from court, as *Atè* was from heaven. Power was thenceforward to be the chosen residence of public spirit ; and no one was to be supposed under any sinister influence, except those who had the misfortune to be in disgrace at court, which was to stand in lieu of all vices and all corruptions. A scheme of perfection to be realized in a monarchy far beyond the visionary Republic of Plato. The whole scenery was exactly disposed to captivate those good souls, whose credulous morality is so invaluable a treasure to crafty politicians. Indeed there was wherewithal to charm everybody, except those few who are not much pleased with professions of supernatural virtue, who know of what stuff such professions are made, for what purposes they are designed, and in what they are sure constantly to end. Many innocent gentlemen, who had been talking prose all their lives without knowing anything of the matter, began at last to open their eyes upon their own merits, and to attribute their not having been lords of the treasury and lords of trade many years before, merely to the prevalence of party, and to the ministerial power, which had frustrated the good intentions of the court in favour of their abilities. Now was the time to unlock the sealed fountain of royal bounty, which had been infamously monopolized and huckstered, and to let it flow at large upon the whole people. The time was come, to restore royalty to its original splendour. *Mettre le Roy hors de page*¹, became

¹ 'To set the King above guardianship' — a phrase applied to Louis XI.

a sort of watchword. And it was constantly in the mouths of all the runners of the court, that nothing could preserve the balance of the constitution from being overturned by the rabble, or by a faction of the nobility, but to free the sovereign effectually from that ministerial tyranny under which the royal dignity had been oppressed in the person of his Majesty's grandfather.

These were some of the many artifices used to reconcile the people to the great change which was made in the persons who composed the ministry, and the still greater which was made and avowed in its constitution. As to individuals, other methods were employed with them ; in order so thoroughly to disunite every party, and even every family, that *no concert, order, or effect, might appear in any future opposition*. And in this manner an administration without connection with the people, or with one another, was first put in possession of government. What good consequences followed from it, we have all seen ; whether with regard to virtue, public or private ; to the ease and happiness of the sovereign ; or to the real strength of government. But as so much stress was then laid on the necessity of this new project, it will not be amiss to take a view of the effects of this royal servitude and vile durance, which was so deplored in the reign of the late monarch, and was so carefully to be avoided in the reign of his successor. The effects were these.

In times full of doubt and danger to his person and family, George II maintained the dignity of his crown connected with the liberty of his people, not only unimpaired but improved, for the space of thirty-three years. He overcame a dangerous rebellion, abetted by foreign force, and raging in the

heart of his kingdoms ; and thereby destroyed the seeds of all future rebellion that could arise upon the same principle. He carried the glory, the power, the commerce of England, to a height unknown even to this renowned nation in the times of its greatest prosperity : and he left his succession resting on the true and only true foundations of all national and all regal greatness ; affection at home, reputation abroad, trust in allies, terror in rival nations. The most ardent lover of his country cannot wish for Great Britain a happier fate than to continue as she was then left. A people, emulous as we are in affection to our present sovereign, know not how to form a prayer to heaven for a greater blessing upon his virtues, or a higher state of felicity and glory, than that he should live, and should reign, and when Providence ordains it, should die, exactly like his illustrious predecessor.

A great prince may be obliged (though such a thing cannot happen very often) to sacrifice his private inclination to his public interest. A wise prince will not think that such a restraint implies a condition of servility ; and truly, if such was the condition of the last reign, and the effects were also such as we have described, we ought, no less for the sake of the sovereign whom we love, than for our own, to hear arguments convincing indeed, before we depart from the maxims of that reign, or fly in the face of this great body of strong and recent experience.

One of the principal topics which was then, and has been since, much employed by that political *

* See the political writings of the late Dr Brown, and many others. [John Brown (1715-66) was the writer of the *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Time*, as well as of an *Essay upon Satire*, which gained him Warburton's friendship.]

school, is an affected terror of the growth of an aristocratic power, prejudicial to the rights of the Crown, and the balance of the constitution. Any new powers exercised in the House of Lords, or in the House of Commons, or by the Crown, ought certainly to excite the vigilant and anxious jealousy of a free people. Even a new and unprecedented course of action in the whole legislature, without great and evident reason, may be a subject of just uneasiness. I will not affirm, that there may not have lately appeared in the House of Lords, a disposition to some attempts derogatory to the legal rights of the subject¹. If any such have really appeared, they have arisen, not from a power properly aristocratic, but from the same influence which is charged with having excited attempts of a similar nature in the House of Commons; which House, if it should have been betrayed into an unfortunate quarrel with its constituents, and involved in a charge of the very same nature, could have neither power nor inclination to repel such attempts in others. Those attempts in the House of Lords can no more be called aristocratic proceedings, than the proceedings with regard to the county of Middlesex in the House of Commons can with any sense be called democratical.

It is true, that the peers have a great influence in the kingdom, and in every part of the public concerns. While they are men of property, it is impossible to prevent it, except by such means as must prevent all property from its natural operation: an event not easily to be compassed, while property is power; nor by any means to be wished, while the

¹ Alluding to the debates (1766) on a Bill of Indemnity in connection with the embargo on wheat going out of the country.

least notion exists of the method by which the spirit of liberty acts, and of the means by which it is preserved. If any particular peers¹, by their uniform, upright, constitutional conduct, by their public and their private virtues, have acquired an influence in the country; the people, on whose favour that influence depends, and from whom it arose, will never be duped into an opinion, that such greatness in a peer is the despotism of an aristocracy, when they know and feel it to be the effect and pledge of their own importance.

I am no friend to aristocracy, in the sense at least in which that word is usually understood. If it were not a bad habit to moot cases on the supposed ruin of the constitution, I should be free to declare, that if it must perish, I would rather by far see it resolved into any other form, than lost in that austere and insolent domination. But, whatever my dislikes may be, my fears are not upon that quarter. The question, on the influence of a court, and of a peerage, is not, which of the two dangers is the more eligible, but which is the more imminent. He is but a poor observer, who has not seen, that the generality of peers, far from supporting themselves in a state of independent greatness, are but too apt to fall into an oblivion of their proper dignity, and to run headlong into an abject servitude. Would to God it were true, that the fault of our peers were too much spirit. It is worthy of some observation that these gentlemen, so jealous of aristocracy, make no complaints of the power of those peers (neither few nor inconsiderable) who are always in the train of a court, and whose whole weight must be considered as a portion of the settled influence of the Crown. This is all safe and right; but if

¹ E.g. the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham (1730-82).

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some peers (I am very sorry they are not as many as they ought to be) set themselves, in the great concern of peers and commons, against a back-stairs influence and clandestine government, then the alarm begins; then the constitution is in danger of being forced into an aristocracy.

I rest a little the longer on this court topic, because it was much insisted upon at the time of the great change, and has been since frequently revived by many of the agents of that party; for, whilst they are terrifying the great and opulent with the horrors of mob-government, they are by other managers attempting (though hitherto with little success) to alarm the people with a phantom of tyranny in the nobles. All this is done upon their favourite principle of disunion, of sowing jealousies amongst the different orders of the state, and of disjointing the natural strength of the kingdom; that it may be rendered incapable of resisting the sinister designs of wicked men, who have engrossed the royal power.

Thus much of the topics chosen by the courtiers to recommend their system; it will be necessary to pen a little more at large the nature of that party which was formed for its support. Without this, the whole would have been no better than a visionary amusement, like the scheme of Harrington's political club¹, and not a business in which the nation had a real concern. As a powerful party, and a party constructed on a new principle, it is a very inviting object of curiosity.

It must be remembered, that since the revolution, until the period we are speaking of, the influence of

¹ James Harrington, or Harington (1611-77), formed the Rota Club for political discussion, and was imprisoned in the Tower. The 'scheme' of the club was to aristocratize the country; hence Burke's present allusion.

the Crown had been always employed in supporting the ministers of state, and in carrying on the public business according to their opinions. But the party now in question is formed upon a very different idea. It is to intercept the favour, protection, and confidence of the Crown in the passage to its ministers ; it is to come between them and their importance in Parliament ; it is to separate them from all their natural and acquired dependencies ; it is intended as the control, not the support, of administration. The machinery of this system is perplexed in its movements, and false in its principle. It is formed on a supposition that the king is something external to his government ; and that he may be honoured and aggrandized, even by its debility and disgrace. The plan proceeds expressly on the idea of enfeebling the regular executory power. It proceeds on the idea of weakening the state in order to strengthen the court. The scheme depending entirely on distrust, on disconnection, on mutability by principle, on systematic weakness in every particular member ; it is impossible that the total result should be substantial strength of any kind.

As a foundation of their scheme, the cabal have established a sort of *rota* ¹ in the court. All sorts of parties, by this means, have been brought into administration ; from whence few have had the good fortune to escape without disgrace ; none at all without considerable losses. In the beginning of each arrangement no professions of confidence and support are wanting, to induce the leading men to engage. But while the ministers of the day appear in all the pomp and pride of power, while they have all their canvas spread out to the wind, and every sail filled

¹ See last note *supra*.

with the fair and prosperous gale of royal favour, in a short time they find, they know not how, a current, which sets directly against them : which prevents all progress, and even drives them backwards. They grow ashamed and mortified in a situation, which, by its vicinity to power, only serves to remind them the more strongly of their insignificance. They are obliged either to execute the orders of their inferiors, or to see themselves opposed by the natural instruments of their office. With the loss of their dignity they lose their temper. In their turn they grow troublesome to that cabal which, whether it supports or opposes, equally disgraces and equally betrays them. It is soon found necessary to get rid of the heads of administration ; but it is of the heads only. As there always are many rotten members belonging to the best connections, it is not hard to persuade several to continue in office without their leaders. By this means the party goes out much thinner than it came in ; and is only reduced in strength by its temporary possession of power. Besides, if by accident, or in course of changes, that power should be recovered, the junto have thrown up a retrenchment of these carcasses, which may serve to cover themselves in a day of danger. They conclude, not unwisely, that such rotten members will become the first objects of disgust and resentment to their ancient connections.

They contrive to form in the outward administration two parties at the least ; which, whilst they are tearing one another to pieces, are both competitors for the favour and protection of the cabal ; and, by their emulation, contribute to throw everything more and more into the hands of the interior managers.

A minister of state will sometimes keep himself

totally estranged from all his colleagues ; will differ from them in their councils, will privately traverse, and publicly oppose, their measures. He will, however, continue in his employment. Instead of suffering any mark of displeasure he will be distinguished by an unbounded profusion of court rewards and caresses ; because he does what is expected, and all that is expected, from men in office. He helps to keep some form of administration in being, and keeps it at the same time as weak and divided as possible.

However, we must take care not to be mistaken, or to imagine that such persons have any weight in their opposition. When, by them, administration is convinced of its insignificancy, they are soon to be convinced of their own. They never are suffered to succeed in their opposition. They and the world are to be satisfied, that neither office, nor authority, nor property, nor ability, eloquence, counsel, skill, or union, are of the least importance ; but that the mere influence of the court, naked of all support, and destitute of all management, is abundantly sufficient for all its own purposes.

When any adverse connection is to be destroyed, the cabal seldom appear in the work themselves. They find out some person of whom the party entertains a high opinion. Such a person they endeavour to delude with various pretences. They teach him first to distrust, and then to quarrel with his friends ; among whom, by the same arts, they excite a similar diffidence of him ; so that in this mutual fear and distrust, he may suffer himself to be employed as the instrument in the change which is brought about. Afterwards they are sure to destroy him in his turn, by setting up in his place some person in whom he had himself reposed the greatest confi-

dence, and who serves to carry off a considerable part of his adherents ¹.

When such a person has broke in this manner with his connections, he is soon compelled to commit some flagrant act of iniquitous, personal hostility against some of them (such as an attempt to strip a particular friend of his family estate ²), by which the cabal hope to render the parties utterly irreconcilable. In truth, they have so contrived matters, that people have a greater hatred to the subordinate instruments than to the principal movers.

As in destroying their enemies they make use of instruments not immediately belonging to their corps, so in advancing their own friends they pursue exactly the same method. To promote any of them to considerable rank or emolument, they commonly take care that the recommendation shall pass through the hands of the ostensible ministry : such a recommendation might however appear to the world, as some proof of the credit of ministers, and some means of increasing their strength. To prevent this, the persons so advanced are directed, in all companies, industriously to declare, that they are under no obligations whatsoever to administration ; that they have received their office from another quarter ; that they are totally free and independent.

When the faction has any job of lucre to obtain, or of vengeance to perpetrate, their way is, to select, for the execution, those very persons to whose habits,

¹ The reference in the foregoing paragraph is to the 3rd Duke of Grafton (1735-1811), who was outvoted in his own cabinet, and, on his resignation in 1770, became Privy Seal under Lord North without cabinet rank.

² The ' attempt ' was to ' strip ' the Duke of Portland in favour of a son-in-law of Lord Bute.

friendships, principles, and declarations, such proceedings are publicly known to be the most adverse ; at once to render the instruments the more odious, and therefore the more dependent, and to prevent the people from ever reposing a confidence in any appearance of private friendship or public principle.

If the administration seem now and then, from remissness, or from fear of making themselves disagreeable, to suffer any popular excesses to go unpunished, the cabal immediately sets up some creature of theirs to raise a clamour against the ministers, as having shamefully betrayed the dignity of government. Then they compel the ministry to become active in conferring rewards and honours on the persons who have been the instruments of their disgrace ; and, after having first vilified them with the higher orders for suffering the laws to sleep over the licentiousness of the populace, they drive them (in order to make amends for their former inactivity) to some act of atrocious violence, which renders them completely abhorred by the people. They, who remember the riots which attended the Middlesex election, the opening of the present Parliament, and the transactions relative to Saint George's Fields, will not be at a loss for an application of these remarks.

That this body may be enabled to compass all the ends of its institution, its members are scarcely ever to aim at the high and responsible offices of the state. They are distributed with art and judgment through all the secondary, but efficient, departments of office, and through the households of all the branches of the royal family : so as on one hand to occupy all the avenues to the throne ; and on the other to forward or frustrate the execution of any measure, according to their own interests. For with the credit and sup-

port which they are known to have, though for the greater part in places which are only a genteel excuse for salary, they possess all the influence of the highest posts ; and they dictate publicly in almost everything, even with a parade of superiority. Whenever they dissent (as it often happens) from their nominal leaders, the trained part of the senate, instinctively in the secret, is sure to follow them : provided the leaders, sensible of their situation, do not of themselves recede in time from their most declared opinions. This latter is generally the case. It will not be conceivable to any one who has not seen it, what pleasure is taken by the cabal in rendering these heads of office thoroughly contemptible and ridiculous. And when they are become so, they have then the best chance for being well supported.

The members of the court faction are fully indemnified for not holding places on the slippery heights of the kingdom, not only by the lead in all affairs, but also by the perfect security in which they enjoy less conspicuous, but very advantageous situations. Their places are in express legal tenure, or, in effect, all of them for life. Whilst the first and most respectable persons in the kingdom are tossed about like tennis-balls, the sport of a blind and insolent caprice, no minister dares even to cast an oblique glance at the lowest of their body. If an attempt be made upon one of this corps, immediately he flies to sanctuary, and pretends to the most inviolable of all promises. No conveniency of public arrangement is available to remove any one of them from the specific situation he holds ; and the slightest attempt upon one of them, by the most powerful minister, is a certain preliminary to his own destruction.

Conscious of their independence, they bear themselves with a lofty air to the exterior ministers. Like Janissaries, they derive a kind of freedom from the very condition of their servitude. They may act just as they please ; provided they are true to the great ruling principle of their institution. It is, therefore, not at all wonderful, that people should be so desirous of adding themselves to that body, in which they may possess and reconcile satisfactions the most alluring, and seemingly the most contradictory ; enjoying at once all the spirited pleasure of independence, and all the gross lucre and fat emoluments of servitude.

Here is a sketch, though a slight one, of the constitution, laws, and policy of this new court corporation. The name by which they choose to distinguish themselves, is that of *king's men* or the *king's friends*, by an invidious exclusion of the rest of his Majesty's most loyal and affectionate subjects. The whole system, comprehending the exterior and interior administrations, is commonly called, in the technical language of the court, *double cabinet*¹ ; in French or English, as you choose to pronounce it.

Whether all this be a vision of a distracted brain, or the invention of a malicious heart, or a real faction in the country, must be judged by the appearances which things have worn for eight years past. Thus far I am certain, that there is not a single public man, in or out of office, who has not, at some time or other, borne testimony to the truth of what I have now related. In particular, no persons have been more strong in their assertions,

¹ The exposure of the *double cabinet* is the central object of this pamphlet.

and louder and more indecent in their complaints, than those who compose all the exterior part of the present administration ; in whose time that faction has arrived at such an height of power, and of boldness in the use of it, as may, in the end, perhaps bring about its total destruction.

It is true, that about four years ago, during the administration of the Marquis of Rockingham, an attempt was made to carry on government without their concurrence. However, this was only a transient cloud ; they were hid but for a moment ; and their constellation blazed out with greater brightness, and a far more vigorous influence, some time after it was blown over. An attempt was at that time made (but without any idea of proscription) to break their corps, to discountenance their doctrines, to revive connections of a different kind, to restore the principles and policy of the Whigs, to reanimate the cause of liberty by ministerial countenance ; and then for the first time were men seen attached in office to every principle they had maintained in opposition. No one will doubt, that such men were abhorred and violently opposed by the court faction, and that such a system could have but a short duration.

It may appear somewhat affected, that in so much discourse upon this extraordinary party, I should say so little of the Earl of Bute¹, who is the supposed head of it. But this was neither owing to affectation nor inadvertence. I have carefully avoided the introduction of personal reflections of any kind. Much the greater part of the topics which have been used to blacken this nobleman are either unjust or frivolous. At best, they have a tendency to give

¹ See note, p. 13 *supra*.

the resentment of this bitter calamity a wrong direction, and to turn a public grievance into a mean, personal, or a dangerous national quarrel. Where there is a regular scheme of operations carried on, it is the system, and not any individual person who acts in it, that is truly dangerous. This system has not arisen solely from the ambition of Lord Bute, but from the circumstances which favoured it, and from an indifference to the constitution which had been for some time growing among our gentry. We should have been tried with it, if the Earl of Bute had never existed; and it will want neither a contriving head nor active members, when the Earl of Bute exists no longer. It is not, therefore, to rail at Lord Bute, but firmly to embody against this court party and its practices, which can afford us any prospect of relief in our present condition.

Another motive induces me to put the personal consideration of Lord Bute wholly out of the question. He communicates very little in a direct manner with the greater part of our men of business. This has never been his custom. It is enough for him that he surrounds them with his creatures. Several imagine, therefore, that they have a very good excuse for doing all the work of this faction, when they have no personal connection with Lord Bute. But whoever becomes a party to an administration, composed of insulated individuals, without faith plighted, tie, or common principle; an administration constitutionally impotent, because supported by no party in the nation; he who contributes to destroy the connections of men and their trust in one another, or in any sort to throw the dependence of public counsels upon private will and favour, possibly may have nothing to do with the Earl of

Bute. It matters little whether he be the friend or the enemy of that particular person. But let him be who or what he will, he abets a faction that is driving hard to the ruin of his country. He is sapping the foundation of its liberty, disturbing the sources of its domestic tranquillity, weakening its government over its dependencies, degrading it from all its importance in the system of Europe.

It is this unnatural infusion of a *system of favouritism* into a government which in a great part of its constitution is popular, that has raised the present ferment in the nation. The people, without entering deeply into its principles, could plainly perceive its effects, in much violence, in a great spirit of innovation, and a general disorder in all the functions of government. I keep my eye solely on this system; if I speak of those measures which have arisen from it, it will be so far only as they illustrate the general scheme. This is the fountain of all those bitter waters of which, through an hundred different conduits, we have drunk until we are ready to burst. The discretionary power of the Crown in the formation of ministry, abused by bad or weak men, has given rise to a system, which, without directly violating the letter of any law, operates against the spirit of the whole constitution.

A plan of favouritism for our executory government is essentially at variance with the plan of our legislature. One great end undoubtedly of a mixed government like ours, composed of monarchy, and of controls, on the part of the higher people and the lower, is that the prince shall not be able to violate the laws. This is useful indeed and fundamental. But this, even at first view, is no more than a negative advantage; an armour merely defensive. It is therefore next in order, and equal in importance,

that the discretionary powers which are necessarily vested in the monarch, whether for the execution of the laws, or for the nomination to magistracy and office, or for conducting the affairs of peace and war, or for ordering the revenue, should all be exercised upon public principles and national grounds, and not on the likings or prejudices, the intrigues or policies, of a court. This, I said, is equal in importance to the securing a government according to law. The laws reach but a very little way¹. Constitute government how you please, infinitely the greater part of it must depend upon the exercise of the powers which are left at large to the prudence and uprightness of ministers of state. Even all the use and potency of the laws depends upon them. Without them, your commonwealth is no better than a scheme upon paper; and not a living, active, effective constitution. It is possible that through negligence, or ignorance, or design artfully conducted, ministers may suffer one part of government to languish, another to be perverted from its purposes, and every valuable interest of the country to fall into ruin and decay, without possibility of fixing any single act on which a criminal prosecution can be justly grounded. The due arrangement of men in the active part of the state, far from being foreign to the purposes of a wise government, ought to be among its very first and dearest objects. When, therefore, the abettors of the new system tell us, that between them and their opposers there is nothing but a struggle for power, and that therefore we are no ways concerned in it; we must tell

¹ Cp.—

How small of all that human hearts endure
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.

—Dr Johnson.

those who have the impudence to insult us in this manner, that, of all things, we ought to be the most concerned who, and what sort of men they are that hold the trust of everything that is dear to us. Nothing can render this a point of indifference to the nation, but what must either render us totally desperate, or soothe us into the security of idiots. We must soften into a credulity below the milkiness of infancy to think all men virtuous. We must be tainted with a malignity truly diabolical to believe all the world to be equally wicked and corrupt. Men are in public life as in private, some good, some evil. The elevation of the one, and the depression of the other, are the first objects of all true policy. But that form of government, which, neither in its direct institutions, nor in their immediate tendency, has contrived to throw its affairs into the most trustworthy hands, but has left its whole executory system to be disposed of agreeably to the uncontrolled pleasure of any one man, however excellent or virtuous, is a plan of polity defective not only in that member, but consequentially erroneous in every part of it.

In arbitrary governments, the constitution of the ministry follows the constitution of the legislature. Both the law and the magistrate are the creatures of will. It must be so. Nothing, indeed, will appear more certain, on any tolerable consideration of this matter, than that *every sort of government ought to have its administration correspondent to its legislature*. If it should be otherwise, things must fall into an hideous disorder. The people of a free commonwealth¹, who have taken such care that their laws should be the result of general consent, cannot be so senseless as to suffer their executory system to be

¹ Such as England.

composed of persons on whom they have no dependence, and whom no proofs of the public love and confidence have recommended to those powers, upon the use of which the very being of the State depends.

The popular election of magistrates, and popular disposition of rewards and honours, is one of the first advantages of a free State. Without it, or something equivalent to it, perhaps the people cannot long enjoy the substance of freedom; certainly none of the vivifying energy of good government. The frame of our commonwealth did not admit of such an actual election: but it provided as well, and (while the spirit of the constitution is preserved) better for all the effects of it than by the method of suffrage in any democratic state whatsoever. It had always, until of late, been held the first duty of Parliament *to refuse to support government, until power was in the hands of persons who were acceptable to the people, or while factions predominated in the court in which the nation had no confidence.* Thus all the good effects of popular election were supposed to be secured to us, without the mischiefs attending on perpetual intrigue, and a distinct canvass for every particular office throughout the body of the people. This was the most noble and refined part of our constitution. The people, by their representatives and grandees, were intrusted with a deliberative power in making laws; the king with the control of his negative¹. The king was intrusted with the deliberative choice and the election to office; the people had the negative in a Parliamentary refusal to support. Formerly this power of control was what kept ministers in awe of Parliaments, and Parliaments in reverence with the people. If the use of this power of control on the system and

¹ I.e. the Royal veto.

persons of administration is gone, everything is lost, Parliament and all. We may assure ourselves, that if Parliament will tamely see evil men take possession of all the strongholds of their country, and allow them time and means to fortify themselves, under a pretence of giving them a fair trial, and upon a hope of discovering, whether they will not be reformed by power, and whether their measures will not be better than their morals ; such a Parliament will give countenance to their measures also, whatever that Parliament may pretend, and, whatever those measures may be.

Every good political institution must have a preventive operation as well as a remedial. It ought to have a natural tendency to exclude bad men from government, and not to trust for the safety of the state to subsequent punishment alone ; punishment which has ever been tardy and uncertain ; and which, when power is suffered in bad hands, may chance to fall rather on the injured than the criminal.

Before men are put forward into the great trusts of the state, they ought by their conduct to have obtained such a degree of estimation in their country, as may be some sort of pledge and security to the public, that they will not abuse those trusts. It is no mean security for a proper use of power, that a man has shown by the general tenor of his actions, that the affection, the good opinion, the confidence of his fellow-citizens have been among the principal objects of his life ; and that he has owed none of the gradations of his power or fortune to a settled contempt, or occasional forfeiture of their esteem.

That man who before he comes into power has no friends, or who coming into power is obliged to desert his friends, or who losing it has no friends to sympathize with him ; he who has no sway among

any part of the landed or commercial interest, but whose whole importance has begun with his office, and is sure to end with it, is a person who ought never to be suffered by a controlling Parliament to continue in any of those situations which confer the lead and direction of all our public affairs ; because such a man *has no connection with the interest of the people.*

Those knots or cabals of men who have got together, avowedly without any public principle, in order to sell their conjunct iniquity at the higher rate, and are therefore universally odious, ought never to be suffered to domineer in the state ; because they have *no connection with the sentiments and opinions the people.*

These are considerations which in my opinion enforce the necessity of having some better reason, in a free country, and a free Parliament, for supporting the ministers of the Crown, than that short one, *That the king has thought proper to appoint them.* There is something very courtly in this. But it is a principle pregnant with all sorts of mischief, in a constitution like ours, to turn the views of active men from the country to the court. Whatever be the road to power, that is the road which will be trod. If the opinion of the country be of no use as a means of power or consideration, the qualities which usually procure that opinion will be no longer cultivated. And whether it will be right, in a state so popular in its constitution as ours, to leave ambition without popular motives, and to trust all to the operation of pure virtue in the minds of kings, and ministers, and public men, must be submitted to the judgment and good sense of the people of England.

Cunning men are here apt to break in, and, without directly controverting the principle, to raise ob-

jections from the difficulty under which the sovereign labours, to distinguish the genuine voice and sentiments of his people, from the clamour of a faction, by which it is so easily counterfeited. The nation, they say, is generally divided into parties, with views and passions utterly irreconcilable. If the king should put his affairs into the hands of any one of them, he is sure to disgust the rest ; if he select particular men from among them all, it is a hazard that he disgusts them all. Those who are left out, however divided before, will soon run into a body of opposition ; which, being a collection of many discontents into one focus, will without doubt be hot and violent enough. Faction will make its cries resound through the nation, as if the whole were in an uproar, when by far the majority, and much the better part, will seem for a while as it were annihilated by the quiet in which their virtue and moderation incline them to enjoy the blessings of government. Besides that the opinion of the mere vulgar is a miserable rule even with regard to themselves, on account of their violence and instability. So that if you were to gratify them in their humour to-day, that very gratification would be a ground of their dissatisfaction on the next. Now as all these rules of public opinion are to be collected with great difficulty, and to be applied with equal uncertainty as to the effect, what better can a king of England do, than to employ such men as he finds to have views and inclinations most conformable to his own ; who are least infected with pride and self-will ; and who are least moved by such popular humours as are perpetually traversing his designs, and disturbing his service ; trusting that, when he means no ill to his people, he will be supported in his appointments, whether he chooses to keep or to change, as his

private judgment or his pleasure leads him ? He will find a sure resource in the real weight and influence of the Crown, when it is not suffered to become an instrument in the hands of a faction.

I will not pretend to say, that there is nothing at all in this mode of reasoning ; because I will not assert that there is no difficulty in the art of government. Undoubtedly the very best administration must encounter a great deal of opposition ; and the very worst will find more support than it deserves. Sufficient appearances will never be wanting to those who have a mind to deceive themselves. It is a fallacy in constant use with those who would level all things, and confound right with wrong, to insist upon the inconveniences which are attached to every choice, without taking into consideration the different weight and consequence of those inconveniences. The question is not concerning *absolute* discontent or *perfect* satisfaction in government ; neither of which can be pure and unmixed at any time, or upon any system. The controversy is about that degree of good humour in the people, which may possibly be attained, and ought certainly to be looked for. While some politicians may be waiting to know whether the sense of every individual be against them, accurately distinguishing the vulgar from the better sort, drawing lines between the enterprises of a faction and the efforts of a people, they may chance to see the government, which they are so nicely weighing, and dividing, and distinguishing, tumble to the ground in the midst of their wise deliberation. Prudent men, when so great an object as the security of government, or even its peace, is at stake, will not run the risk of a decision which may be fatal to it. They who can read the political sky

will see a hurricane in a cloud no bigger than a hand at the very edge of the horizon, and will run into the first harbour. No lines can be laid down for civil or political wisdom. They are a matter incapable of exact definition. But, though no man can draw a stroke between the confines of day and night, yet light and darkness are upon the whole tolerably distinguishable. Nor will it be impossible for a prince to find out such a mode of government, and such persons to administer it, as will give a great degree of content to his people; without any curious and anxious research for that abstract, universal, perfect harmony, which while he is seeking, he abandons those means of ordinary tranquillity which are in his power without any research at all.

It is not more the duty than it is the interest of a prince, to aim at giving tranquillity to his government. But those who advise him may have an interest in disorder and confusion. If the opinion of the people is against them, they will naturally wish that it should have no prevalence. Here it is that the people must on their part show themselves sensible of their own value. Their whole importance, in the first instance, and afterwards their whole freedom, is at stake. Their freedom cannot long survive their importance. Here it is that the natural strength of the kingdom, the great peers, the leading landed gentlemen, the opulent merchants and manufacturers, the substantial yeomanry, must interpose to rescue their prince, themselves, and their posterity.

We are at present at issue upon this point. We are in the great crisis of this contention; and the part which men take, one way or other, will serve to discriminate their characters and their principles.

Until the matter is decided, the country will remain in its present confusion. For while a system of administration is attempted, entirely repugnant to the genius of the people and not conformable to the plan of their government, everything must necessarily be disordered for a time, until this system destroys the constitution, or the constitution gets the better of this system.

There is, in my opinion, a peculiar venom and malignity in this political distemper beyond any that I have heard or read of. In former times the projectors of arbitrary government attacked only the liberties of their country; a design surely mischievous enough to have satisfied a mind of the most unruly ambition. But a system unfavourable to freedom may be so formed, as considerably to exalt the grandeur of the State; and men may find, in the pride and splendour of that prosperity, some sort of consolation for the loss of their solid privileges¹. Indeed the increase of the power of the state has often been urged by artful men, as a pretext for some abridgment of the public liberty. But the scheme of the junto under consideration, not only strikes a palsy into every nerve of our free constitution, but in the same degree benumbs and stupefies the whole executive power: rendering government in all its grand operations languid, uncertain, ineffectual; making ministers fearful of attempting, and incapable of executing any useful plan of domestic arrangement, or of foreign politics. It tends to produce neither the security of a free government, nor the energy of a monarchy that is absolute. Accordingly the Crown has dwindled away, in proportion to the unnatural and turgid growth of this excrescence on the court.

¹ The reference is to France.

The interior ministry are sensible, that war is a situation which sets in its full light the value of the hearts of a people ; and they well know, that the beginning of the importance of the people must be the end of theirs. For this reason they discover upon all occasions the utmost fear of everything, which by possibility may lead to such an event. I do not mean that they manifest any of that pious fear which is backward to commit the safety of the country to the dubious experiment of war. Such a fear, being the tender sensation of virtue, excited, as it is regulated, by reason, frequently shows itself in a seasonable boldness, which keeps danger at a distance, by seeming to despise it. Their fear betrays to the first glance of the eye, its true cause, and its real object. Foreign powers, confident in the knowledge of their character, have not scrupled to violate the most solemn treaties ; and, in defiance of them, to make conquests in the midst of a general peace, and in the heart of Europe. Such was the conquest of Corsica, by the professed enemies of the freedom of mankind, in defiance of those who were formerly its professed defenders ¹. We have had just claims upon the same powers : rights which ought to have been sacred to them as well as to us, as they had their origin in our lenity and generosity towards France and Spain in the day of their great humiliation. Such I call the ransom of Manilla ², and the demand on France for the East India

¹ The ' professed enemies ' are the French, the former ' professed defenders ' are the English. George III's Proclamation of Neutrality (1762) contributed to the annexation of Corsica by France in 1768. It is interesting to note in this paragraph and the last, Burke's apparent complete ignorance of the coming French Revolution.

² In 1762 the ransom was fixed at £1,000,000.

prisoners ¹. But these powers put a just confidence in their resource of the *double cabinet*. These demands (one of them at least) are hastening fast towards an acquittal by prescription. Oblivion begins to spread her cobwebs over all our spirited remonstrances. Some of the most valuable branches of our trade are also on the point of perishing from the same cause. I do not mean those branches which bear without the hand of the vine-dresser ; I mean those which the policy of treaties had formerly secured to us ; I mean to mark and distinguish the trade of Portugal, the loss of which, and the power of the cabal, have one and the same era.

If by any chance the ministers who stand before the curtain possess or affect any spirit, it makes little or no impression. Foreign courts and ministers, who were among the first to discover and to profit by this invention of the *double cabinet*, attend very little to their remonstrances. They know that those shadows of ministers have nothing to do in the ultimate disposal of things. Jealousies and animosities are sedulously nourished in the outward administration, and have been even considered as a *causa sine qua non* in its constitution : thence foreign courts have a certainty, that nothing can be done by common counsel in this nation. If one of those ministers officially takes up a business with spirit, it serves only the better to signalize the meanness of the rest, and the discord of them all. His colleagues in office are in haste to shake him off, and to disclaim the whole of his proceedings. Of this nature was that astonishing transaction, in which Lord Rochford, our ambassador at Paris, remonstrated against the attempt upon Corsica, in consequence of a direct

¹ Pondicherry.

authority from Lord Shelburne¹. This remonstrance the French minister treated with the contempt that was natural: as he was assured from the ambassador of his court to ours, that these orders of Lord Shelburne were not supported by the rest of the (I had like to have said British) administration. Lord Rochford, a man of spirit, could not endure this situation. The consequences were, however, curious. He returns from Paris, and comes home full of anger. Lord Shelburne, who gave the orders, is obliged to give up the seals. Lord Rochford, who obeyed these orders, receives them. He goes, however, into another department of the same office, that he might not be obliged officially to acquiesce, in one situation, under what he had officially remonstrated against, in another. At Paris, the Duke of Choiseul considered this office arrangement as a compliment to him: here it was spoken of as an attention to the delicacy of Lord Rochford. But whether the compliment was to one or both, to this nation it was the same. By this transaction the condition of our court lay exposed in all its nakedness. Our office correspondence has lost all pretence to authenticity: British policy is brought into derision in those nations, that a while ago trembled at the power of our arms, whilst they looked up with confidence to the equity, firmness, and candour, which shone in all our negotiations. I represent this matter exactly in the light in which it has been universally received.

¹ Sir William Petty 2nd Earl of Shelburne (1737-1805), created Marquess of Lansdowne, 1784. He was Secretary of State under Pitt (1766-68), but his resignation was due rather to the perpetual opposition of his colleagues and of the King than to his sympathy with the Corsicans, as hinted by Burke.

Such has been the aspect of our foreign politics, under the influence of a *double cabinet*. With such an arrangement at court, it is impossible it should have been otherwise. Nor is it possible that this scheme should have a better effect upon the government of our dependencies, the first, the dearest, and most delicate objects, of the interior policy of this empire. The colonies know, that administration is separated from the court, divided within itself, and detested by the nation. The *double cabinet* has, in both the parts of it, shown the most malignant dispositions towards them, without being able to do them the smallest mischief.

They are convinced, by sufficient experience, that no plan, either of lenity, or rigour, can be pursued with uniformity and perseverance. Therefore they turn their eyes entirely from Great Britain, where they have neither dependence on friendship, nor apprehension from enmity. They look to themselves, and their own arrangements. They grow every day into alienation from this country; and whilst they are becoming disconnected with our government, we have not the consolation to find, that they are even friendly in their new independence. Nothing can equal the futility, the weakness, the rashness, the timidity, the perpetual contradiction in the management of our affairs in that part of the world. A volume might be written on this melancholy subject¹; but it were better to leave it entirely to the reflections of the reader himself, than not to treat it in the extent it deserves.

In what manner our domestic economy is affected by this system, it is needless to explain. It is the perpetual subject of their own complaints.

¹ Chapters of such a 'volume' were written (1895) by the late Sir John Seeley in his *Expansion of England*.

The court party resolve the whole into faction. Having said something before upon this subject, I shall only observe here, that, when they give this account of the prevalence of faction, they present no very favourable aspect of the confidence of the people in their own government. They may be assured, that however they amuse themselves with a variety of projects for substituting something else in the place of that great and only foundation of government, the confidence of the people, every attempt will but make their condition worse. When men imagine that their food is only a cover for poison, and when they neither love nor trust the hand that serves it, it is not the name of the roast beef of Old England that will persuade them to sit down to the table that is spread for them. When the people conceive that laws, and tribunals, and even popular assemblies, are perverted from the ends of their institution, they find in those names of degenerated establishments only new motives to discontent. Those bodies, which, when full of life and beauty, lay in their arms, and were their joy and comfort, when dead and putrid, become but the more loathsome from remembrance of former endearments. A sullen gloom and furious disorder prevail by fits; the nation loses its relish for peace and prosperity; as it did in that season of fulness which opened our troubles in the time of Charles the First. A species of men to whom a state of order would become a sentence of obscurity are nourished into a dangerous magnitude by the heat of intestine disturbances; and it is no wonder that, by a sort of sinister piety, they cherish, in their turn, the disorders which are the parents of all their consequence. Superficial observers consider such persons as the cause of the public uneasiness, when, in truth, they are nothing

more than the effect of it. Good men look upon this distracted scene with sorrow and indignation. Their hands are tied behind them. They are despoiled of all the power which might enable them to reconcile the strength of government with the rights of the people. They stand in a most distressing alternative. But in the election among evils they hope better things from temporary confusion than from established servitude. In the mean time, the voice of law is not to be heard. Fierce licentiousness begets violent restraints. The military arm is the sole reliance ; and then, call your constitution what you please, it is the sword that governs. The civil power, like every other that calls in the aid of an ally stronger than itself, perishes by the assistance it receives. But the contrivers of this scheme of government will not trust solely to the military power ; because they are cunning men. Their restless and crooked spirit drives them to rake in the dirt of every kind of expedient. Unable to rule the multitude, they endeavour to raise divisions amongst them. One mob is hired to destroy another ; a procedure which at once encourages the boldness of the populace and justly increases their discontent. Men become pensioners of state on account of their abilities in the array of riot, and the discipline of confusion. Government is put under the disgraceful necessity of protecting from the severity of the laws that very licentiousness, which the laws had been before violated to repress¹. Everything partakes of the original disorder. Anarchy predominates without freedom, and servitude without submission or subordination. These are the consequences inevitable to our public peace, from the scheme

¹ The reference is to the pardon of the Middlesex Election rioters.

of rendering the executory government at once odious and feeble ; of freeing administration from the constitutional and salutary control of Parliament, and inventing for it a *new control*, unknown to the constitution, an *interior cabinet* ; which brings the whole body of government into confusion and contempt.

After having stated, as shortly as I am able, the effects of this system on our foreign affairs, on the policy of our government with regard to our dependencies, and on the interior economy of the commonwealth ; there remains only, in this part of my design, to say something of the grand principle which first recommended this system at court. The pretence was, to prevent the king from being enslaved by a faction, and made a prisoner in his closet. This scheme might have been expected to answer at least its own end, and to indemnify the king in his personal capacity, for all the confusion into which it has thrown his government. But has it in reality answered this purpose ? I am sure, if it had, every affectionate subject would have one motive for enduring with patience all the evils which attend it.

In order to come at the truth in this matter, it may not be amiss to consider it somewhat in detail. I speak here of the king, and not of the Crown ; the interests of which we have already touched. Independent of that greatness which a king possesses merely by being a representative of the national dignity, the things in which he may have an individual interest seem to be these ;—wealth accumulated ; wealth spent in magnificence, pleasure or beneficence ; personal respect and attention ; and, above all, private ease and repose of mind. These compose the inventory of prosperous circumstances, whether

they regard a prince or a subject ; their enjoyments differing only in the scale upon which they are formed.

Suppose then we were to ask, whether the king has been richer than his predecessors in accumulated wealth, since the establishment of the plan of favouritism ? I believe it will be found that the picture of royal indigence, which our court has presented until this year, has been truly humiliating. Nor has it been relieved from this unseemly distress, but by means which have hazarded the affection of the people, and shaken their confidence in Parliament. If the public treasures had been exhausted in magnificence and splendour, this distress would have been accounted for, and in some measure justified. Nothing would be more unworthy of this nation, than with a mean and mechanical rule, to mete out the splendour of the Crown. Indeed I have found very few persons disposed to so ungenerous a procedure. But the generality of people, it must be confessed, do feel a good deal mortified when they compare the wants of the court with its expenses. They do not behold the cause of this distress in any part of the apparatus of royal magnificence. In all this, they see nothing but the operations of parsimony, attended with all the consequences of profusion. Nothing expended, nothing saved. Their wonder is increased by their knowledge, that besides the revenue settled on his Majesty's civil list to the amount of £800,000 a year, he has a further aid from a large pension list, near £90,000 a year, in Ireland ; from the produce of the duchy of Lancaster (which we are told has been greatly improved) ; from the revenue of the duchy of Cornwall ; from the American quit-rents ; from the four and a half per cent. duty in the Leeward Islands ; this last

worth to be sure considerably more than £40,000 a year. The whole is certainly not much short of a million annually.

These are revenues within the knowledge and cognizance of our national councils. We have no direct right to examine into the receipts from his Majesty's German dominions, and the bishopric of Osnaburg¹. This is unquestionably true. But that which is not within the province of Parliament is yet within the sphere of every man's own reflection. If a foreign prince resided amongst us, the state of his revenues could not fail of becoming the subject of our speculation. Filled with an anxious concern for whatever regards the welfare of our sovereign, it is impossible, in considering the miserable circumstances into which he has been brought, that this obvious topic should be entirely passed over. There is an opinion universal, that these revenues produce something not inconsiderable, clear of all charges and establishments. This produce the people do not believe to be hoarded, nor perceive to be spent. It is accounted for in the only manner it can, by supposing that it is drawn away, for the support of that court faction, which, whilst it distresses the nation, impoverishes the prince in every one of his resources. I once more caution the reader, that I do not urge this consideration concerning the foreign revenue, as if I supposed we had a direct right to examine into the expenditure of any part of it; but solely for the purpose of showing how little this system of favouritism has been advantageous to the monarch himself; which, without magnificence, has sunk him into a state of unnatural poverty; at the same

¹ A titular dignity of the Prince of Wales. The revenue was insignificant.

time that he possessed every means of affluence, from ample revenues, both in this country, and in other parts of his dominions.

Has this system provided better for the treatment becoming his high and sacred character, and secured the king from those disgusts attached to the necessity of employing men who are not personally agreeable ? This is a topic upon which for many reasons I could wish to be silent ; but the pretence of securing against such causes of uneasiness, is the corner-stone of the court-party. It has however so happened, that if I were to fix upon any one point, in which this system has been more particularly and shamefully blamable, the effects which it has produced would justify me in choosing for that point its tendency to degrade the personal dignity of the sovereign, and to expose him to a thousand contradictions and mortifications. It is but too evident in what manner these projectors of royal greatness have fulfilled all their magnificent promises. Without recapitulating all the circumstances of the reign, every one of which is, more or less, a melancholy proof of the truth of what I have advanced, let us consider the language of the court but a few years ago, concerning most of the persons now in the external administration : let me ask, whether any enemy to the personal feelings of the sovereign could possibly contrive a keener instrument of mortification, and degradation of all dignity, than almost every part and member of the present arrangement ? Nor, in the whole course of our history, has any compliance with the will of the people ever been known to extort from any prince a greater contradiction to all his own declared affections and dislikes, than that which is now adopted, in direct opposition to everything the people approve and desire.

An opinion prevails, that greatness has been more than once advised to submit to certain condescensions towards individuals, which have been denied to the entreaties of a nation. For the meanest and most dependent instrument of this system knows, that there are hours when its existence may depend upon his adherence to it ; and he takes his advantage accordingly. Indeed it is a law of nature, that whoever is necessary to what we have made our object is sure, in some way, or in some time or other, to become our master. All this however is submitted to, in order to avoid that monstrous evil of governing in concurrence with the opinion of the people. For it seems to be laid down as a maxim, that a king has some sort of interest in giving uneasiness to his subjects : that all who are pleasing to them, are to be of course disagreeable to him : that as soon as the persons who are odious at court are known to be odious to the people, it is snatched at as a lucky occasion of showering down upon them all kinds of emoluments and honours. None are considered as well-wishers to the Crown, but those who advise to some unpopular Course of action ; none capable of serving it, but those who are obliged to call at every instant upon all its power for the safety of their lives. None are supposed to be fit priests in the temple of government, but the persons who are compelled to fly into it for sanctuary. Such is the effect of this refined project ; such is ever the result of all the contrivances, which are used to free men from the servitude of their reason, and from the necessity of ordering their affairs according to their evident interests. These contrivances oblige them to run into a real and ruinous servitude in order to avoid a supposed restraint, that might be attended with advantage.

If therefore this system has so ill answered its own grand pretence of saving the king from the necessity of employing persons disagreeable to him, has it given more peace and tranquillity to his Majesty's private hours? No, most certainly. The father of his people cannot possibly enjoy repose, while his family is in such a state of distraction. Then what has the Crown or the king profited by all this fine-wrought scheme? Is he more rich, or more splendid, or more powerful, or more at his ease, by so many labours and contrivances? Have they not beggared his exchequer, tarnished the splendour of his court, sunk his dignity, galled his feelings, discomposed the whole order and happiness of his private life?

It will be very hard, I believe, to state in what respect the king has profited by that faction which presumptuously choose to call themselves *his friends*.

If particular men had grown into an attachment, by the distinguished honour of the society of their sovereign; and, by being the partakers of his amusements¹, came sometimes to prefer the gratification of his personal inclinations to the support of his high character, the thing would be very natural, and it would be excusable enough. But the pleasant part of the story is, that these *king's friends* have no more ground for usurping such a title, than a resident freeholder in Cumberland or in Cornwall. They are only known to their sovereign by kissing his hand, for the offices, pensions, and grants, into which they have deceived his benignity. May no storm ever come, which will put the firmness of their attachment to the proof; and which, in the

¹ As in the instance of Lord Bute with Frederick, Prince of Wales.

midst of confusions, and terrors, and sufferings, may demonstrate the eternal difference between a true and severe friend to the monarchy, and a slippery sycophant of the court! *Quantum infido scurræ distabit amicus*¹.

So far I have considered the effect of the court system, chiefly as it operates upon the executive government, on the temper of the people, and on the happiness of the sovereign. It remains that we should consider, with a little attention, its operation upon Parliament.

Parliament was indeed the great object of all these politics, the end at which they aimed, as well as the instrument by which they were to operate. But, before Parliament could be made subservient to a system, by which it was to be degraded from the dignity of a national council into a mere member of the court, it must be greatly changed from its original character.

In speaking of this body, I have my eye chiefly on the House of Commons. I hope I shall be indulged in a few observations on the nature and character of that assembly; not with regard to its *legal form and power*, but to its *spirit*, and to the purposes it is meant to answer in the constitution.

The House of Commons was supposed originally to be *no part of the standing government of this country*. It was considered as a *control* issuing *immediately* from the people, and speedily to be resolved into the mass from whence it arose. In this respect it was in the higher part of government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity it was hoped would of course preponderate in all discussions, not only between

¹ Horace, *Epist.* 1 xviii. 2.

the people and the standing authority of the Crown, but between the people and the fleeting authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped that, being of a middle nature between subject and government, they would feel with a more tender and a nearer interest everything that concerned the people, than the other remoter and more permanent parts of legislature.

Whatever alterations time and the necessary accommodation of business may have introduced, this character can never be sustained, unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would (among public misfortunes) be an evil more natural and tolerable, that the House of Commons should be infected with every epidemical frenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors. By this want of sympathy they would cease to be a House of Commons. For it is not the derivation of the power of that House from the people, which makes it in a distinct sense their representative. The king is the representative of the people ; so are the lords ; so are the judges. They all are trustees for the people, as well as the Commons ; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder ; and although government certainly is an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.

A popular origin cannot therefore be the characteristic distinction of a popular representative. This belongs equally to all parts of government and in all forms. The virtue, spirit, and essence

of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a control *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency. It was designed as a control *for* the people. Other institutions have been formed for the purpose of checking popular excesses ; and they are, I apprehend, fully adequate to their object. If not, they ought to be made so. The House of Commons, as it was never intended for the support of peace and subordination, is miserably appointed for that service ; having no stronger weapon than its mace, and no better officer than its serjeant-at-arms, which it can command of its own proper authority. A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy ; an anxious care of public money ; an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint : these seem to be the true characteristics of a House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons, and a petitioning nation ; a House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair ; in the utmost harmony with ministers, whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence ; who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments ; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account ; who, in all disputes between the people and administration, presume against the people ; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to them ; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate ; but it is not, to any popular purpose, a House of Commons. This change from an immediate state of procuration and delegation to a

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course of acting as from original power, is the way in which all the popular magistracies in the world have been perverted from their purposes. It is indeed their greatest and sometimes their incurable corruption. For there is a material distinction between that corruption by which particular points are carried against reason (this is a thing which cannot be prevented by human wisdom, and is of less consequence), and the corruption of the principle itself. For then the evil is not accidental, but settled. The distemper becomes the natural habit.

For my part, I shall be compelled to conclude the principle of Parliament to be totally corrupted, and therefore its ends entirely defeated, when I see two symptoms: first, a rule of indiscriminate support to all ministers; because this destroys the very end of Parliament as a control, and is a general, previous sanction to misgovernment: and secondly, the setting up any claims adverse to the right of free election; for this tends to subvert the legal authority by which the House of Commons sits.

I know that, since the Revolution, along with many dangerous, many useful powers of government have been weakened. It is absolutely necessary to have frequent recourse to the legislature. Parliaments must therefore sit every year, and for great part of the year. The dreadful disorders of frequent elections have also necessitated a septennial instead of a triennial duration. These circumstances, I mean the constant habit of authority, and the unfrequency of elections, have tended very much to draw the House of Commons towards the character of a standing senate. It is a disorder which has arisen from the cure of greater disorders;

it has arisen from the extreme difficulty of reconciling liberty under a monarchical government, with external strength and with internal tranquillity.

It is very clear that we cannot free ourselves entirely from this great inconvenience ; but I would not increase an evil, because I was not able to remove it ; and because it was not in my power to keep the House of Commons religiously true to its first principles, I would not argue for carrying it to a total oblivion of them. This has been the great scheme of power in our time. They, who will not conform their conduct to the public good, and cannot support it by the prerogative of the Crown, have adopted a new plan. They have totally abandoned the shattered and old-fashioned fortress of prerogative, and made a lodgment in the stronghold of Parliament itself. If they have any evil design to which there is no ordinary legal power commensurate, they bring it into Parliament. In Parliament the whole is executed from the beginning to the end. In Parliament the power of obtaining their object is absolute ; and the safety in the proceeding perfect : no rules to confine, no after-reckonings to terrify. Parliament cannot, with any great propriety, punish others for things in which they themselves have been accomplices. Thus the control of Parliament upon the executory power is lost ; because Parliament is made to partake in every considerable act of government. *Impeachment, that great guardian of the purity of the constitution, is in danger of being lost, even to the idea of it.*

By this plan several important ends are answered to the cabal. If the authority of Parliament supports itself, the credit of every act of government, which they contrive, is saved ; but if the act be so

very odious that the whole strength of Parliament is insufficient to recommend it, then Parliament is itself discredited; and this discredit increases more and more that indifference to the constitution, which it is the constant aim of its enemies, by their abuse of Parliamentary powers, to render general among the people. Whenever Parliament is persuaded to assume the offices of executive government, it will lose all the confidence, love, and veneration, which it has ever enjoyed whilst it was supposed the *corrective and control* of the acting powers of the state. This would be the event, though its conduct in such a perversion of its functions should be tolerably just and moderate; but if it should be iniquitous, violent, full of passion, and full of faction, it would be considered as the most intolerable of all the modes of tyranny.

For a considerable time this separation of the representatives from their constituents went on with a silent progress; and had those, who conducted the plan for their total separation, been persons of temper and abilities any way equal to the magnitude of their design, the success would have been infallible: but by their precipitancy they have laid it open in all its nakedness; the nation is alarmed at it: and the event may not be pleasant to the contrivers of the scheme. In the last session, the corps called the *king's friends* made a hardy attempt, all at once, *to alter the right of election itself*¹; to put it into the power of the House of Commons to disable any person disagreeable to them from sitting in Parliament, without any other rule than their own pleasure; to make incapacities, either general for descriptions of men, or particular

¹ The reference is to John Wilkes (1727-97) and the Middlesex Election of 1768-69.

for individuals; and to take into their body, persons who avowedly had never been chosen by the majority of legal electors, nor agreeably to any known rule of law.

The arguments upon which this claim was founded and combated, are not my business here. Never has a subject been more amply and more learnedly handled, nor upon one side, in my opinion, more satisfactorily; they who are not convinced by what is already written would not receive conviction *though one arose from the dead*.

I too have thought on this subject: but my purpose here, is only to consider it as a part of the favourite project of government; to observe on the motives which led to it; and to trace its political consequences.

A violent rage for the punishment of Mr Wilkes was the pretence of the whole. This gentleman, by setting himself strongly in opposition to the court cabal¹, had become at once an object of their persecution, and of the popular favour. The hatred of the court party pursuing, and the countenance of the people protecting him, it very soon became not at all a question on the man, but a trial of strength between the two parties. The advantage of the victory in this particular contest was the present, but not the only, nor by any means the principal object. Its operation upon the character of the House of Commons was the great point in

¹ Wilkes founded *The North Briton* in 1762, and published in No. 45 a libel on George III, which, with other pamphlets, etc., was the cause of his outlawry, and first expulsion from the House of Commons. 'Opposition to the Court Cabal' is a mild description! His case in Middlesex was supported by Junius and Dr Johnson.

view. The point to be gained by the cabal was this ; that a precedent should be established, tending to show, *That the favour of the people was not so sure a road as the favour of the court even to popular honours and popular trusts.* A strenuous resistance to every appearance of lawless power ; a spirit of independence carried to some degree of enthusiasm ; an inquisitive character to discover, and a bold one to display, every corruption and every error of government ; these are the qualities which recommend a man to a seat in the House of Commons, in open and merely popular elections. An indolent and submissive disposition ; a disposition to think charitably of all the actions of men in power, and to live in a mutual intercourse of favours with them ; an inclination rather to countenance a strong use of authority, than to bear any sort of licentiousness on the part of the people ; these are unfavourable qualities in an open election for members of Parliament.

The instinct which carries the people towards the choice of the former, is justified by reason ; because a man of such a character, even in its exorbitances, does not directly contradict the purposes of a trust, the end of which is a control on power. The latter character, even when it is not in its extreme, will execute this trust but very imperfectly ; and, if deviating to the least excess, will certainly frustrate instead of forwarding the purposes of a control on government. But when the House of Commons was to be new modelled, this principle was not only to be changed but reversed. Whilst any errors committed in support of power were left to the law, with every advantage of favourable construction, of mitigation, and finally of pardon ; all excesses on the side of liberty, or

in pursuit of popular favour, or in defence of popular rights and privileges, were not only to be punished by the rigour of the known law, but by a *discretionary* proceeding, which brought on *the loss of the popular object itself*. Popularity was to be rendered, if not directly penal, at least highly dangerous. The favour of the people might lead even to a disqualification of representing them. Their odium might become, strained through the medium of two or three constructions, the means of sitting as the trustee of all that was dear to them. This is punishing the offence in the offending part. Until this time, the opinion of the people, through the power of an assembly, still in some sort popular, led to the greatest honours and emoluments in the gift of the Crown. Now the principle is reversed; and the favour of the court is the only sure way of obtaining and holding those honours which ought to be in the disposal of the people.

It signifies very little how this matter may be quibbled away. Example, the only argument of effect in civil life, demonstrates the truth of my proposition. Nothing can alter my opinion concerning the pernicious tendency of this example, until I see some man for his indiscretion in the support of power, for his violent and intemperate servility, rendered incapable of sitting in Parliament. For as it now stands, the fault of overstraining popular qualities, and, irregularly if you please, asserting popular privileges, has led to disqualification; the opposite fault never has produced the slightest punishment. Resistance to power has shut the door of the House of Commons to one man; obsequiousness and servility, to none.

Not that I would encourage popular disorder, or any disorder. But I would leave such offences to

the law, to be punished in measure and proportion. The laws of this country are for the most part constituted, and wisely so, for the general ends of government, rather than for the preservation of our particular liberties. Whatever therefore is done in support of liberty, by persons not in public trust, or not acting merely in that trust, is liable to be more or less out of the ordinary course of the law, and the law itself is sufficient to animadvert upon it with great severity. Nothing indeed can hinder that severe letter from crushing us, except the temperaments it may receive from a trial by jury. But if the habit prevails of *going beyond the law*, and superseding this judicature, of carrying offences, real or supposed, into the legislative bodies, who shall establish themselves into *courts of criminal equity* (so the *Star Chamber* has been called by Lord Bacon), all the evils of the *Star Chamber* are revived. A large and liberal construction in ascertaining offences, and a discretionary power in punishing them, is the idea of *criminal equity*; which is in truth a monster in jurisprudence. It signifies nothing whether a court for this purpose be a committee of council¹, or a House of Commons, or a House of Lords; the liberty of the subject will be equally subverted by it. The true end and purpose of that House of Parliament, which entertains such a jurisdiction, will be destroyed by it.

I will not believe, what no other man living believes, that Mr Wilkes was punished for the indecency of his publications, or the impiety of his ransacked closet. If he had fallen in a common slaughter of libellers and blasphemers, I could well believe that nothing more was meant than was pre-

¹ E.g. the *Star Chamber*.

tended. But when I see, that, for years together, full as impious and perhaps more dangerous writings to religion, and virtue, and order, have not been punished, nor their authors discountenanced; that the most audacious libels on royal majesty have passed without notice; that the most treasonable invectives against the laws, liberties, and constitution of the country, have not met with the slightest animadversion; I must consider this as a shocking and shameless pretence. Never did an envenomed scurrility against everything sacred and civil, public and private, rage through the kingdom with such a furious and unbridled license. All this while the peace of the nation must be shaken, to ruin one libeller, and to tear from the populace a single favourite.

Nor is it that vice merely skulks in an obscure and contemptible impunity. Does not the public behold with indignation, persons not only generally scandalous in their lives, but the identical persons¹ who, by their society, their instruction, their example, their encouragement, have drawn this man into the very faults which have furnished the cabal with a pretence for his persecution, loaded with every kind of favour, honour, and distinction, which a court can bestow? Add but the crime of servility (the *ſædum crimen ſervitutis*²) to every other crime, and the whole mass is immediately transmuted into virtue, and becomes the just subject of reward and honour. When therefore

¹ The reference is chiefly to Francis Dashwood, 15th Baron de Despencer (1708–81), Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Bute. Dashwood founded the ‘Hell-fire Club,’ a ‘Society of the Monks of Medmenham Abbey.’

² Tacitus, *Hist.* I, i.

I reflect upon this method pursued by the cabal in distributing rewards and punishments, I must conclude that Mr Wilkes is the object of persecution, not on account of what he has done in common with others who are the objects of reward, but for that in which he differs from many of them : that he is pursued for the spirited dispositions which are blended with his vices ; for his unconquerable firmness, for his resolute, indefatigable, strenuous resistance against oppression¹.

In this case, therefore, it was not the man that was to be punished, nor his faults that were to be discountenanced. Opposition to acts of power was to be marked by a kind of civil proscription. The popularity which should arise from such an opposition was to be shown unable to protect it. The qualities by which court is made to the people, were to render every fault inexpiable, and every error irretrievable. The qualities by which court is made to power, were to cover and to sanctify everything. He that will have a sure and honourable seat in the House of Commons must take care how he adventures to cultivate popular qualities ; otherwise he may remember the old maxim, *Breves et infaustos populi Romani amores*². If, therefore, a pursuit of popularity expose a man to greater dangers than a disposition to servility, the principle which is the life and soul of popular elections will perish out of the constitution.

It behoves the people of England to consider how the House of Commons, under the operation of these examples, must of necessity be constituted. On the

¹ Subsequently to the date of this pamphlet, Wilkes sat as M.P. for Middlesex from 1774 to 1790, officiating as Lord Mayor of London in 1774.

² Tacitus, *Ann.* II, xli.

side of the court will be all honours, offices, emoluments ; every sort of personal gratification to avarice or vanity ; and, what is of more moment to most gentlemen, the means of growing, by innumerable petty services to individuals, into a spreading interest in their country. On the other hand, let us suppose a person unconnected with the court, and in opposition to its system. For his own person, no office, or emolument, or title ; no promotion, ecclesiastical, or civil, or military, or naval, for children, or brothers, or kindred. In vain an expiring interest in a borough calls for offices, or small livings, for the children of mayors, and aldermen, and capital burgesses. His court rival has them all. He can do an infinite number of acts of generosity and kindness, and even of public spirit. He can procure indemnity from quarters¹. He can procure advantages in trade. He can get pardons for offences. He can obtain a thousand favours, and avert a thousand evils. He may, while he betrays every valuable interest of the kingdom, be a benefactor, a patron, a father, a guardian angel to his borough. The unfortunate independent member has nothing to offer, but harsh refusal, or pitiful excuse, or despondent representation of a hopeless interest. Except from his private fortune, in which he may be equalled, perhaps exceeded, by his court competitor, he has no way of showing any one good quality, or of making a single friend. In the House, he votes forever in a dispirited minority. If he speaks, the doors are locked. A body of loquacious placemen go out to tell the world that all he aims at is to get into office. If he has not the talent of elocution, which is the case of many as wise and knowing men

¹ ' Quarters ' = having soldiers quartered on his constituents.

as any in the House, he is liable to all these inconveniences, without the *éclat* which attends upon any tolerably successful exertion of eloquence. Can we conceive a more discouraging post of duty than this? Strip it of the poor reward of popularity; suffer even the excesses committed in defence of the popular interest to become a ground for the majority of that House to form a disqualification out of the line of the law, and at their pleasure, attended not only with the loss of the franchise but with every kind of personal disgrace.—If this shall happen, the people of this kingdom may be assured that they cannot be firmly or faithfully served by any man. It is out of the nature of men and things that they should; and their presumption will be equal to their folly if they expect it. The power of the people, within the laws, must show itself sufficient to protect every representative in the animated performance of his duty, or that duty cannot be performed. The House of Commons can never be a control on other parts of government, unless they are controlled themselves by their constituents; and unless these constituents possess some right in the choice of that House, which it is not in the power of that House to take away. If they suffer this power of arbitrary incapacitation to stand, they have utterly perverted every other power of the House of Commons. The late proceeding I will not say is contrary to law; it *must* be so; for the power which is claimed cannot, by any possibility, be a legal power in any limited member of government.

The power which they claim, of declaring incapacities, would not be above the just claims of a final judicature, if they had not laid it down as a leading principle, that they had no rule in the exercise of this claim, but their own *discretion*. Not one of

their abettors has ever undertaken to assign the principle of unfitness, the species or degree of delinquency, on which the House of Commons will expel, nor the mode of proceeding upon it, nor the evidence upon which it is established. The direct consequence of which is, that the first franchise of an Englishman, and that on which all the rest vitally depend, is to be forfeited for some offence which no man knows, and which is to be proved by no known rule whatsoever of legal evidence. This is so anomalous to our whole constitution, that I will venture to say, the most trivial right which the subject claims, never was, nor can be, forfeited in such a manner.

The whole of their usurpation is established upon this method of arguing. We do not *make* laws. No ; we do not contend for this power. We only *declare* law ; and as we are a tribunal both competent and supreme, what we declare to be law becomes law, although it should not have been so before. Thus the circumstance of having no *appeal* from their jurisdiction is made to imply that they have no *rule* in the exercise of it : the judgment does not derive its validity from its conformity to the law ; but preposterously the law is made to attend on the judgment ; and the rule of the judgment is no other than the *occasional will of the House*. An arbitrary discretion leads, legality follows ; which is just the very nature and description of a legislative act.

This claim in their hands was no barren theory. It was pursued into its utmost consequences ; and a dangerous principle has begot a correspondent practice. A systematic spirit has been shown upon both sides. The electors of Middlesex chose a person whom the House of Commons had voted

incapable ; and the House of Commons has taken in a member whom the electors of Middlesex had not chosen ¹. By a construction on that legislative power which had been assumed, they declared that the true legal sense of the country was contained in the minority, on that occasion ; and might, on a resistance to a vote of incapacity, be contained in any minority.

When any construction of law goes against the spirit of the privilege it was meant to support, it is a vicious construction. It is material to us to be represented really and *bonâ fide*, and not in forms, in types, and shadows, and fictions of law. The right of election was not established merely as a *matter of form*, to satisfy some method and rule of technical reasoning ; it was not a principle which might substitute a *Titius* or a *Mævius*, a *John Doe* or *Richard Roe*, in the place of a man specially chosen ; not a principle which was just as well satisfied with one man as with another. It is a right, the effect of which is to give to the people that man, and *that man only*, whom, by their voices actually, not constructively given, they declare that they know, esteem, love, and trust. This right is a matter within their own power of judging and feeling ; not an *ens rationis* and creature of law : nor can those devices, by which anything else is substituted in the place of such an actual choice, answer in the least degree the end of representation.

I know that the courts of law have made as strained constructions in other cases. Such is the construction in common recoveries. The method of construction which in that case gives to the persons in remainder, for their security and representative, the

¹ Colonel Luttrell was 'taken in' on one of the annulments of Wilkes' election.

door-keeper, crier, or sweeper of the court, or some other shadowy being without substance or effect, is a fiction of a very coarse texture. This was however suffered by the acquiescence of the whole kingdom, for ages ; because the evasion of the old statute of Westminster, which authorized perpetuities, had more sense and utility than the law which was evaded. But an attempt to turn the right of election into such a farce and mockery as a fictitious fine and recovery, will, I hope, have another fate ; because the laws which give it are infinitely dear to us, and the evasion is infinitely contemptible.

The people indeed have been told, that this power of discretionary disqualification is vested in hands that they may trust, and who will be sure not to abuse it to their prejudice. Until I find something in this argument differing from that on which every mode of despotism has been defended, I shall not be inclined to pay it any great compliment. The people are satisfied to trust themselves with the exercise of their own privileges, and do not desire this kind intervention of the House of Commons to free them from the burden. They are certainly in the right. They ought not to trust the House of Commons with a power over their franchises ; because the constitution, which placed two other co-ordinate powers to control it, reposed no such confidence in that body. It were a folly well deserving servitude for its punishment, to be full of confidence where the laws are full of distrust ; and to give to a House of Commons, arrogating to its sole resolution the most harsh and odious part of legislative authority, that degree of submission which is due only to the legislature itself.

When the House of Commons, in an endeavour to obtain new advantages at the expense of the other

orders of the state, for the benefit of the *commons at large*, have pursued strong measures ; if it were not just, it was at least natural, that the constituents should connive at all their proceedings ; because we were ourselves ultimately to profit. But when this submission is urged to us, in a contest between the representatives and ourselves, and where nothing can be put into their scale which is not taken from ours, they fancy us to be children when they tell us they are our representatives, our own flesh and blood, and that all the stripes they give us are for our good. The very desire of that body to have such a trust contrary to law reposed in them, shows that they are not worthy of it. They certainly will abuse it ; because all men possessed of an uncontrolled discretionary power leading to the aggrandizement and profit of their own body have always abused it ; and I see no particular sanctity in our times, that is at all likely, by a miraculous operation, to overrule the course of nature.

But we must purposely shut our eyes, if we consider this matter merely as a contest between the House of Commons and the electors. The true contest is between the electors of the kingdom and the Crown ; the Crown acting by an instrumental House of Commons. It is precisely the same, whether the ministers of the Crown can disqualify by a dependent House of Commons, or by a dependent Court of *Star Chamber*, or by a dependent Court of King's Bench. If once members of Parliament can be practically convinced that they do not depend on the affection or opinion of the people for their political being, they will give themselves over, without even an appearance of reserve, to the influence of the court.

Indeed a Parliament unconnected with the people

is essential to a ministry unconnected with the people ; and therefore those who saw through what mighty difficulties the interior ministry waded, and the exterior were dragged, in this business, will conceive of what prodigious importance, the new corps of *king's men* held this principle of occasional and personal incapacitation, to the whole body of their design.

When the House of Commons was thus made to consider itself as the master of its constituents, there wanted but one thing to secure that House against all possible future deviation towards popularity : an *unlimited* fund of money to be laid out according to the pleasure of the court.

To complete the scheme of bringing our court to a resemblance to the neighbouring monarchies, it was necessary, in effect, to destroy those appropriations of revenue, which seem to limit the property, as the other laws had done the powers, of the Crown. An opportunity for this purpose was taken, upon an application to Parliament for payment of the debts of the Civil List ; which in 1769 had amounted to £513,000. Such application had been made upon former occasions ; but to do it in the former manner would by no means answer the present purpose.

Whenever the Crown had come to the Commons to desire a supply for the discharging of debts due on the Civil List, it was always asked and granted with one of the three following qualifications ; sometimes with all of them. Either it was stated, that the revenue had been diverted from its purposes by Parliament ; or that those duties had fallen short of the sum for which they were given by Parliament, and that the intention of the legislature had not been fulfilled ; or that the money required to discharge the Civil List debt was to be raised chargeable on the

Civil List duties. In the reign of Queen Anne, the Crown was found in debt. The lessening and granting away some part of her revenue by Parliament was alleged as the cause of that debt, and pleaded as an equitable ground, such it certainly was, for discharging it. It does not appear that the duties which were then applied to the ordinary government produced clear above £580,000 a year; because, when they were afterwards granted to George the First, £120,000 was added to complete the whole to £700,000 a year. Indeed it was then asserted, and, I have no doubt, truly, that for many years the net produce did not amount to above £550,000. The queen's extraordinary charges were besides very considerable; equal, at least, to any we have known in our time. The application to Parliament was not for an absolute grant of money; but to empower the queen to raise it by borrowing upon the Civil List funds.

The Civil List debt was twice paid in the reign of George the First. The money was granted upon the same plan which had been followed in the reign of Queen Anne. The Civil List revenues were then mortgaged for the sum to be raised, and stood charged with the ransom of their own deliverance.

George the Second received an addition to his Civil List. Duties were granted for the purpose of raising £800,000 a year. It was not until he had reigned nineteen years, and after the last rebellion, that he called upon Parliament for a discharge of the Civil List debt. The extraordinary charges brought on by the rebellion, account fully for the necessities of the Crown. However, the extraordinary charges of government were not thought a ground fit to be relied on.

A deficiency of the Civil List duties for several

years before was stated as the principal, if not the sole ground on which an application to Parliament could be justified. About this time the produce of these duties had fallen pretty low ; and even upon an average of the whole reign they never produced £800,000 a year clear to the Treasury.

That prince reigned fourteen years afterwards : not only no new demands were made ; but with so much good order were his revenues and expenses regulated, that, although many parts of the establishment of the court were upon a larger and more liberal scale than they have been since, there was a considerable sum in hand, on his decease, amounting to about £170,000 applicable to the service of the Civil List of his present Majesty. So that, if this reign commenced with a greater charge than usual, there was enough, and more than enough, abundantly to supply all the extraordinary expense. That the Civil List should have been exceeded in the two former reigns, especially in the reign of George the First, was not at all surprising. His revenue was but £700,000 annually ; if it ever produced so much clear. The prodigious and dangerous disaffection to the very being of the establishment, and the cause of a pretender then powerfully abetted from abroad, produced many demands of an extraordinary nature both abroad and at home. Much management and great expenses were necessary. But the throne of no prince has stood upon more unshaken foundations than that of his present Majesty¹.

To have exceeded the sum given for the Civil

¹ In 1777, the debates on the Civil List, to which an annual sum of £100,000 was added, led to Burke's advocacy of Economical Reform in the public service (1780).

List, and to have incurred a debt without special authority of Parliament, was *primâ facie*, a criminal act: as such, ministers ought naturally rather to have withdrawn it from the inspection, than to have exposed it to the scrutiny of Parliament. Certainly they ought, of themselves, officially to have come armed with every sort of argument, which, by explaining, could excuse, a matter in itself of presumptive guilt. But the terrors of the House of Commons are no longer for ministers.

On the other hand, the peculiar character of the House of Commons, as trustee of the public purse, would have led them to call with a punctilious solicitude for every public account, and to have examined into them with the most rigorous accuracy.

The capital use of an account is, that the reality of the charge, the reason of incurring it, and the justice and necessity of discharging it, should all appear antecedent to the payment. No man ever pays first, and calls for his account afterwards; because he would thereby let out of his hands the principal, and indeed only effectual, means of compelling a full and fair one. But, in national business, there is an additional reason for a previous production of every account. It is a check, perhaps the only one, upon a corrupt and prodigal use of public money. An account after payment is to no rational purpose an account. However, the House of Commons thought all these to be antiquated principles: they were of opinion, that the most Parliamentary way of proceeding was, to pay first what the court thought proper to demand, and to take its chance for an examination into accounts at some time of greater leisure.

The nation had settled £800,000 a year on the

Crown, as sufficient for the support of its dignity, upon the estimate of its own ministers. When ministers came to Parliament, and said that this allowance had not been sufficient for the purpose, and that they had incurred a debt of £500,000, would it not have been natural for Parliament first to have asked how, and by what means, their appropriated allowance came to be insufficient? Would it not have savoured of some attention to justice, to have seen in what periods of administration this debt had been originally incurred; that they might discover, and if need were, animadvert on the persons who were found the most culpable? To put their hands upon such articles of expenditure as they thought improper or excessive, and to secure, in future, against such misapplication or exceeding? Accounts for any other purposes are but a matter of curiosity, and no genuine Parliamentary object. All the accounts which could answer any Parliamentary end were refused, or postponed by previous questions. Every idea of prevention was rejected, as conveying an improper suspicion of the ministers of the Crown.

When every leading account had been refused, many others were granted with sufficient facility.

But with great candour also, the House was informed, that hardly any of them could be ready until the next session; some of them perhaps not so soon. But, in order firmly to establish the precedent of *payment previous to account*, and to form it into a settled rule of the House, the god in the machine was brought down, nothing less than the wonder-working *law of Parliament*. It was alleged, that it is the law of Parliament, when any demand comes from the Crown, that the House must go immediately into the committee of supply; in which committee it was allowed, that the production and examination of

accounts would be quite proper and regular. It was therefore carried, that they should go into the committee without delay, and without accounts, in order to examine with great order and regularity things that could not possibly come before them. After this stroke of orderly and Parliamentary wit and humour they went into the committee ; and very generously voted the payment.

There was a circumstance in that debate too remarkable to be overlooked. This debt of the Civil List was all along argued upon the same footing as a debt of the State, contracted upon national authority. Its payment was urged as equally pressing upon the public faith and honour ; and when the whole year's account was stated in what is called *the budget*, the ministry valued themselves on the payment of so much public debt, just as if they had discharged £500,000 of navy or exchequer bills. Though, in truth, their payment, from the sinking fund, of debt, which was never contracted by Parliamentary authority, was, to all intents and purposes, so much debt incurred. But such is the present notion of public credit, and payment of debt. No wonder that it produces such effects.

Nor was the House at all more attentive to a provident security against future, than it had been to a vindictive retrospect to past mismanagements. I should have thought indeed that a ministerial promise, during their own continuance in office, might have been given, though this would have been but a poor security for the public. Mr Pelham gave such an assurance, and he kept his word. But nothing was capable of extorting from our ministers anything which had the least resemblance to a promise of confining the expenses of the civil list within the limits which had been settled by Parliament.

This reserve of theirs I look upon to be equivalent to the clearest declaration, that they were resolved upon a contrary course.

However, to put the matter beyond all doubt, in the Speech from the Throne after thanking Parliament for the relief so liberally granted, the ministers inform the two Houses, that they will *endeavour* to confine the expenses of the civil government—within what limits, think you ? those which the law had prescribed ? Not in the least—‘such limits as the *honour of the Crown* can possibly admit.’

Thus they established an *arbitrary* standard for that dignity which Parliament had defined and limited to a *legal* standard. They gave themselves, under the lax and indeterminate idea of the *honour of the Crown*, a full loose for all manner of dissipation, and all manner of corruption. This arbitrary standard they were not afraid to hold out to both Houses ; while an idle and unoperative act of Parliament, estimating the dignity of the Crown at £800,000 and confining it to that sum, adds to the number of obsolete statutes which load the shelves of libraries, without any sort of advantage to the people.

After this proceeding, I suppose that no man can be so weak as to think that the Crown is limited to any settled allowance whatsoever. For if the ministry has £800,000 a year by the law of the land ; and if by the law of Parliament all the debts which exceed it are to be paid previously to the production of any account ; I presume that this is equivalent to an income with no other limits than the abilities of the subject and the moderation of the court ; that is to say, it is such an income as is possessed by every absolute monarch in Europe. It amounts, as a person of great ability said in the debate, to an unlimited power of drawing upon the sinking

fund. Its effect on the public credit of this kingdom must be obvious; for in vain is the sinking fund the great buttress of all the rest, if it be in the power of the ministry to resort to it for the payment of any debts which they may choose to incur, under the name of the Civil List, and through the medium of a committee, which thinks itself obliged by law to vote supplies without any other account than that of the mere existence of the debt.

Five hundred thousand pounds is a serious sum. But it is nothing to the prolific principle upon which the sum was voted: a principle that may be well called, *the fruitful mother of an hundred more*. Neither is the damage to public credit of very great consequence, when compared with that which results to public morals and to the safety of the constitution, from the exhaustless mine of corruption opened by the precedent, and to be wrought by the principle, of the late payment of the debts of the Civil List. The power of discretionary disqualification by one law of Parliament, and the necessity of paying every debt of the civil list by another law of Parliament, if suffered to pass unnoticed, must establish such a fund of rewards and terrors as will make Parliament the best appendage and support of arbitrary power that ever was invented by the wit of man. This is felt. The quarrel is begun between the representatives and the people. The court faction have at length committed them.

In such a strait the wisest may well be perplexed, and the boldest staggered. The circumstances are in a great measure new. We have hardly any landmarks from the wisdom of our ancestors to guide us. At best we can only follow the spirit of their proceeding in other cases. I know the diligence

with which my observations on our public disorders have been made ; I am very sure of the integrity of the motives on which they are published ; I cannot be equally confident in any plan for the absolute cure of those disorders, or for their certain future prevention. My aim is to bring this matter into more public discussion. Let the sagacity of others work upon it. It is not uncommon for medical writers to describe histories of diseases very accurately, on whose cure they can say but very little.

The first ideas which generally suggest themselves, for the cure of Parliamentary disorders, are, to shorten the duration of Parliaments ; and to disqualify all, or a great number of placemen, from a seat in the House of Commons. Whatever efficacy there may be in those remedies, I am sure in the present state of things it is impossible to apply them. A restoration of the right of free election is a preliminary indispensable to every other reformation. What alterations ought afterwards to be made in the constitution, is a matter of deep and difficult research.

If I wrote merely to please the popular palate, it would indeed be as little troublesome to me as to another, to extol these remedies, so famous in speculation, but to which their greatest admirers have never attempted seriously to resort in practice. I confess then, that I have no sort of reliance upon either a triennial Parliament, or a place-bill. With regard to the former, perhaps it might rather serve to counteract, than to promote the ends that are proposed by it. To say nothing of the horrible disorders among the people attending frequent elections, I should be fearful of committing every three years, the independent gentlemen of the

country into a contest with the Treasury. It is easy to see which of the contending parties would be ruined first. Whoever has taken a careful view of public proceedings, so as to endeavour to ground his speculations on his experience, must have observed how prodigiously greater the power of ministry is in the first and last session of a Parliament than it is in the intermediate period, when members sit a little firm on their seats. The persons of the greatest Parliamentary experience, with whom I have conversed, did constantly, in canvassing the fate of questions, allow something to the court side, upon account of the elections depending or imminent. The evil complained of, if it exists in the present state of things, would hardly be removed by a triennial Parliament: for, unless the influence of government in elections can be entirely taken away, the more frequently they return, the more they will harass private independence; the more generally men will be compelled to fly to the settled systematic interest of government, and to the resources of a boundless civil list. Certainly something may be done, and ought to be done, towards lessening that influence in elections; and this will be necessary upon a plan either of longer or shorter duration of Parliament. But nothing can so perfectly remove the evil, as not to render such contentions, too frequently repeated, utterly ruinous, first to independence of fortune, and then to independence of spirit. As I am only giving an opinion on this point, and not at all debating it in an adverse line, I hope I may be excused in another observation. With great truth I may aver, that I never remember to have talked on this subject with any man much conversant with public business, who considered short Parliaments as a real

improvement of the constitution. Gentlemen, warm in a popular cause, are ready enough to attribute all the declarations of such persons to corrupt motives. But the habit of affairs, if, on one hand, it tends to corrupt the mind, furnishes it, on the other, with the means of better information. The authority of such persons will always have some weight. It may stand upon a par with the speculations of those who are less practised in business ; and who, with perhaps purer intentions, have not so effectual means of judging. It is besides an effect of vulgar and puerile malignity to imagine, that every statesman is of course corrupt ; and that his opinion, upon every constitutional point, is solely formed upon some sinister interest.

The next favourite remedy is a place-bill. The same principle guides in both ; I mean, the opinion which is entertained by many, of the infallibility of laws and regulations in the cure of public distempers. Without being as unreasonably doubtful as many are unwisely confident, I will only say, that this also is a matter very well worthy of serious and mature reflection. It is not easy to foresee, what the effect would be, of disconnecting with Parliament the greatest part of those who hold civil employments, and of such mighty and important bodies as the military and naval establishments. It were better perhaps that they should have a corrupt interest in the forms of the constitution, than that they should have none at all. This is a question altogether different from the disqualification of a particular description of revenue-officers from seats in Parliament ; or, perhaps, of all the lower sorts of them from votes in elections. In the former case, only the few are affected ; in the latter, only the inconsiderable. But a great official, a great professional, a great

military and naval interest, all necessarily comprehending many people of the first weight, ability, wealth, and spirit, has been gradually formed in the kingdom. These new interests must be let into a share of representation, else possibly they may be inclined to destroy those institutions of which they are not permitted to partake. This is not a thing to be trifled with ; nor is it every well-meaning man that is fit to put his hands to it. Many other serious considerations occur. I do not open them here, because they are not directly to my purpose ; proposing only to give the reader some taste of the difficulties that attend all capital changes in the constitution ; just to hint the uncertainty, to say no worse, of being able to prevent the court, as long as it has the means of influence abundantly in its power, of applying that influence to Parliament ; and perhaps, if the public method were precluded, of doing it in some worse and more dangerous method. Underhand and oblique ways would be studied. The science of evasion, already tolerably understood, would then be brought to the greatest perfection. It is no inconsiderable part of wisdom, to know how much of an evil ought to be tolerated ; lest, by attempting a degree of purity impracticable in degenerate times and manners instead of cutting off the subsisting ill-practices, new corruptions might be produced for the concealment and security of the old. It were better, undoubtedly, that no influence at all could affect the mind of a member of Parliament. But of all modes of influence, in my opinion, a place under the government is the least disgraceful to the man who holds it, and by far the most safe to the country. I would not shut out that sort of influence which is open and visible, which is connected with the dignity and the service of the state, when it is

not in my power to prevent the influence of contracts, of subscriptions, of direct bribery, and those innumerable methods of clandestine corruption, which are abundantly in the hands of the court, and which will be applied as long as these means of corruption, and the disposition to be corrupted, have existence amongst us. Our constitution stands on a nice equipoise, with steep precipices and deep waters upon all sides of it. In removing it from a dangerous leaning towards one side, there may be a risk of oversetting it on the other. Every project of a material change in a government so complicated as ours, combined at the same time with external circumstances still more complicated, is a matter full of difficulties : in which a considerate man will not be too ready to decide ; a prudent man too ready to undertake ; or an honest man too ready to promise. They do not respect the public nor themselves, who engage for more than they are sure that they ought to attempt, or that they are able to perform. These are my sentiments, weak perhaps, but honest and unbiassed ; and submitted entirely to the opinion of grave men, well affected to the constitution of their country, and of experience in what may best promote or hurt it.

Indeed, in the situation in which we stand, with an immense revenue, an enormous debt, mighty establishments, government itself a great banker and a great merchant, I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interest in the representatives, but *the interposition of the body of the people itself*, whenever it shall appear, by some flagrant and notorious act, by some capital innovation, that these representatives are going to overleap the fences of the law and to introduce an arbitrary power. This interposition is a most un-

pleasant remedy. But, if it be a legal remedy, it is intended on some occasion to be used ; to be used then only, when it is evident that nothing else can hold the constitution to its true principles.

The distempers of monarchy were the great subjects of apprehension and redress, in the last century ; in this the distempers of Parliament. It is not in Parliament alone that the remedy for Parliamentary disorders can be completed ; hardly indeed can it begin there. Until a confidence in government is re-established, the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. Standards for judging more systematically upon their conduct ought to be settled in the meetings of counties and corporations. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured.

By such means something may be done. By such means it may appear who those are, that, by an indiscriminate support of all administrations, have totally banished all integrity and confidence out of public proceedings ; have confounded the best men with the worst ; and weakened and dissolved, instead of strengthening and compacting, the general frame of government. If any person is more concerned for government and order, than for the liberties of his country ; even he is equally concerned to put an end to this course of indiscriminate support. It is this blind and undistinguishing support, that feeds the spring of those very disorders, by which he is frightened into the arms of the faction which contains in itself the source of all disorders, by enfeebling all the visible and regular authority of the state. The distemper is increased by his injudicious and preposterous endeavours, or pretences, for the cure of it.

An exterior administration, chosen for its impotency, or after it is chosen purposely rendered impotent, in order to be rendered subservient, will not be obeyed. The laws themselves will not be respected, when those who execute them are despised : and they will be despised, when their power is not immediate from the Crown, or natural in the kingdom. Never were ministers better supported in Parliament. Parliamentary support comes and goes with office, totally regardless of the man, or the merit. Is government strengthened ? It grows weaker and weaker. The popular torrent gains upon it every hour. Let us learn from our experience. It is not support that is wanting to government, but reformation. When ministry rests upon public opinion, it is not indeed built upon a rock of adamant ; it has, however, some stability. But when it stands upon private humour, its structure is of stubble, and its foundation is on quicksand. I repeat it again,—He that supports every administration subverts all government. The reason is this : The whole business in which a court usually takes an interest goes on at present equally well, in whatever hands, whether high or low, wise or foolish, scandalous or reputable ; there is nothing therefore to hold it firm to any one body of men, or to any one consistent scheme of politics. Nothing interposes, to prevent the full operation of all the caprices and all the passions of a court upon the servants of the public. The system of administration is open to continual shocks and changes, upon the principles of the meanest cabal, and the most contemptible intrigue. Nothing can be solid and permanent. All good men at length fly with horror from such a service. Men of rank and ability, with the spirit which ought to animate such men

in a free state, while they decline the jurisdiction of dark cabal on their actions and their fortunes, will, for both, cheerfully put themselves upon their country. They will trust an inquisitive and distinguishing Parliament ; because it does inquire, and does distinguish. If they act well, they know, that, in such a Parliament they will be supported against any intrigue ; if they act ill, they know that no intrigue can protect them. This situation, however awful, is honourable. But in one hour, and in the self-same assembly, without any assigned or assignable cause, to be precipitated from the highest authority to the most marked neglect, possibly into the greatest peril of life and reputation, is a situation full of danger, and destitute of honour. It will be shunned equally by every man of prudence, and every man of spirit.

Such are the consequences of the division of court from the administration ; and of the division of public men among themselves. By the former of these, lawful government is undone ; by the latter, all opposition to lawless power is rendered impotent. Government may in a great measure be restored, if any considerable bodies of men have honesty and resolution enough never to accept administration, unless this garrison of *king's men*, which is stationed, as in a citadel, to control and enslave it, be entirely broken and disbanded, and every work they have thrown up be levelled with the ground. The disposition of public men to keep this corps together, and to act under it, or to co-operate with it, is a touchstone by which every administration ought in future to be tried. There has not been one which has not sufficiently experienced the utter incompatibility of that faction with the public peace, and with all the ends of good government : since, if they opposed it,

they soon lost every power of serving the Crown ; if they submitted to it, they lost all the esteem of their country. Until ministers give to the public a full proof of their entire alienation from that system, however plausible their pretences, we may be sure they are more intent on the emoluments than the duties of office. If they refuse to give this proof, we know of what stuff they are made. In this particular, it ought to be the electors' business to look to their representatives. The electors ought to esteem it no less culpable in their member to give a single vote in Parliament to such an administration, than to take an office under it ; to endure it, than to act in it. The notorious infidelity and versatility of members of Parliament, in their opinions of men and things, ought in a particular manner to be considered by the electors in the inquiry which is recommended to them. This is one of the principal holdings of that destructive system, which has endeavoured to unhinge all the virtuous, honourable, and useful connections in the kingdom.

This cabal has, with great success, propagated a doctrine which serves for a colour to those acts of treachery ; and whilst it receives any degree of countenance it will be utterly senseless to look for a vigorous opposition to the court party. The doctrine is this : That all political connections are in their nature factious, and as such ought to be dissipated and destroyed ; and that the rule for forming administrations is mere personal ability, rated by the judgment of this cabal upon it, and taken by draughts from every division and denomination of public men. This decree was solemnly promulgated by the head of the court corps, the Earl of Bute himself, in a speech which he made, in the year 1766, against the then administration, the only administra-

tion, which he has ever been known directly and publicly to oppose.

It is indeed in no way wonderful, that such persons should make such declarations. That connection and faction are equivalent terms, is an opinion which has been carefully inculcated at all times by unconstitutional statesmen. The reason is evident. Whilst men are linked together, they easily and speedily communicate the alarm of any evil design. They are enabled to fathom it with common counsel, and to oppose it with united strength. Whereas, when they lie dispersed, without concert, order, or discipline, communication is uncertain, counsel difficult, and resistance impracticable. Where men are not acquainted with each other's principles, nor experienced in each other's talents, nor at all practised in their mutual habits and dispositions by joint efforts in business ; no personal confidence, no friendship, no common interest, subsisting among them ; it is evidently impossible that they can act a public part with uniformity, perseverance, or efficacy. In a connection the most inconsiderable man, by adding to the weight of the whole, has his value, and his use ; out of it, the greatest talents are wholly unserviceable to the public. No man, who is not inflamed by vainglory into enthusiasm, can flatter himself that his single, unsupported, desultory, unsystematic endeavours are of power to defeat the subtle designs and united cabals of ambitious citizens. When bad men combine, the good must associate ; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.

It is not enough in a situation of trust in the commonwealth, that a man means well to his country ; it is not enough that in his single person he never

did an evil act, but always voted according to his conscience, and even harangued against every design which he apprehended to be prejudicial to the interests of his country. This innoxious and ineffectual character, that seems formed upon a plan of apology and disculpation, falls miserably short of the mark of public duty. That duty demands and requires, that what is right should not only be made known, but made prevalent; that what is evil should not only be detected, but defeated. When the public man omits to put himself in a situation of doing his duty with effect, it is an omission that frustrates the purposes of his trust almost as much as if he had formally betrayed it. It is surely no very rational account of a man's life, that he has always acted right; but has taken special care, to act in such a manner that his endeavours could not possibly be productive of any consequence¹.

I do not wonder that the behaviour of many parties should have made persons of tender and scrupulous virtue somewhat out of humour with all sorts of connection in politics. I admit that people frequently acquire in such confederacies a narrow bigoted, and proscriptive spirit; that they are apt to sink the idea of the general good in this circumscribed and partial interest. But, where duty renders a critical situation a necessary one, it is our business to keep free from the evils attendant upon it; and not to fly from the situation itself. If a fortress is seated in an unwholesome air, an officer of the garrison is obliged to be attentive to his health, but he must not desert his station. Every profession, not excepting the glorious one of a soldier, or the sacred one of a priest, is liable to its own

¹ The allusion in the foregoing paragraph is to Chatham.

particular vices ; which, however, form no argument against those ways of life ; nor are the vices themselves inevitable to every individual in those professions. Of such a nature are connections in politics ; essentially necessary for the full performance of our public duty, accidentally liable to degenerate into faction. Commonwealths are made of families, free commonwealths of parties also ; and we may as well affirm, that our natural regards and ties of blood tend inevitably to make men bad citizens, as that the bonds of our party weaken those by which we are held to our country.

Some legislators ¹ went so far as to make neutrality in party a crime against the state. I do not know whether this might not have been rather to overstrain the principle. Certain it is, the best patriots in the greatest commonwealths have always commended and promoted such connections. *Idem sentire de republica* ² was with them a principal ground of friendship and attachment ; nor do I know any other capable of forming firmer, dearer, more pleasing, more honourable, and more virtuous habitudes. The Romans carried this principle a great way. Even the holding of offices together, the disposition of which arose from chance, not selection, gave rise to a relation which continued for life. It was called *necessitudo sortis* ³ ; and it was looked upon with a sacred reverence. Breaches

¹ Solon.

² Cicero, *De Amicitia*, x.

³ This phrase—'the obligation of lot'—described the relationship of the Roman *quæstor* to the *prætor*. The quotation from Cicero prefixed by Burke to this pamphlet refers to the treachery of Verres, as *quæstor*, to his *prætor*. A similar breach of an analogous 'obligation' is discovered by Burke in the present relations of the Court and the nation.

of any of these kinds of civil relation were considered as acts of the most distinguished turpitude. The whole people was distributed into political societies, in which they acted in support of such interests in the state as they severally affected. For it was then thought no crime to endeavour by every honest means to advance to superiority and power those of your own sentiments and opinions. This wise people was far from imagining that those connections had no tie, and obliged to no duty; but that men might quit them without shame, upon every call of interest. They believed private honour to be the great foundation of public trust; that friendship was no mean step towards patriotism; that he who, in the common intercourse of life, showed he regarded somebody besides himself, when he came to act in a public situation, might probably consult some other interest than his own. Never may we become *plus sages que les sages*, as the French comedian has happily expressed it, wiser than all the wise and good men who have lived before us. It was their wish, to see public and private virtues, not dissonant and jarring, and mutually destructive, but harmoniously combined, growing out of one another in a noble and orderly gradation, reciprocally supporting and supported. In one of the most fortunate periods of our history this country was governed by a *connection*; I mean, the great connection of Whigs in the reign of Queen Anne. They were complimented upon the principle of this connection by a poet who was in high esteem with them. Addison, who knew their sentiments, could not praise them for what they considered as no proper subject of commendation. As a poet who knew his business, he could not applaud them for a thing which in general estimation was

not highly reputable. Addressing himself to Britain

Thy favourites grow not up by fortune's sport,
Or from the crimes or follies of a court.
On the firm basis of desert they rise,
From long-tried faith, and friendship's holy ties.
—*The Campaign.*

The Whigs of those days believed that the only proper method of rising into power was through hard essays of practised friendship and experimented fidelity. At that time it was not imagined, that patriotism was a bloody idol, which required the sacrifice of children and parents, or dearest connections in private life, and of all the virtues that rise from those relations. They were not of that ingenious paradoxical morality, to imagine that a spirit of moderation was properly shown in patiently bearing the sufferings of your friends; or that disinterestedness was clearly manifested at the expense of other people's fortune. They believed that no men could act with effect, who did not act in concert; that no men could act in concert, who did not act with confidence; that no men could act with confidence, who were not bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests.

These wise men, for such I must call Lord Sunderland, Lord Godolphin, Lord Somers, and Lord Marlborough, were too well principled in these maxims upon which the whole fabric of public strength is built, to be blown off their ground by the breath of every childish talker. They were not afraid that they should be called an ambitious junto; or that their resolution to stand or fall together should, by placemen, be interpreted into a scuffle for places.

Party is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. For my part, I find it impossible to conceive, that any one believes in his own politics, or thinks them to be of any weight, who refuses to adopt the means of having them reduced into practice. It is the business of the speculative philosopher to mark the proper ends of government. It is the business of the politician, who is the philosopher in action, to find out proper means towards those ends, and to employ them with effect. Therefore every honourable connection will avow it is their first purpose, to pursue every just method to put the men who hold their opinions into such a condition as may enable them to carry their common plans into execution, with all the power and authority of the state. As this power is attached to certain situations, it is their duty to contend for these situations. Without a proscription of others, they are bound to give to their own party the preference in all things; and by no means, for private considerations, to accept any offers of power in which the whole body is not included; nor to suffer themselves to be led, or to be controlled, or to be overbalanced, in office or in council, by those who contradict the very fundamental principles on which their party is formed, and even those upon which every fair connection must stand. Such a generous contention for power, on such manly and honourable maxims, will easily be distinguished from the mean and interested struggle for place and emolument. The very style of such persons will serve to discriminate them from those numberless impostors, who have deluded the ignorant with professions incompatible with human practice, and have afterwards

incensed them by practices below the level of vulgar rectitude.

It is an advantage to all narrow wisdom and narrow morals, that their maxims have a plausible air : and, on a cursory view, appear equal to first principles. They are light and portable. They are as current as copper coin ; and about as valuable. They serve equally the first capacities and the lowest ; and they are, at least, as useful to the worst men as to the best. Of this stamp is the cant of *Not men, but measures* ; a sort of charm by which many people get loose from every honourable engagement. When I see a man acting this desultory and disconnected part, with as much detriment to his own fortune as prejudice to the cause of any party, I am not persuaded that he is right ; but I am ready to believe he is in earnest. I respect virtue in all its situations ; even when it is found in the unsuitable company of weakness. I lament to see qualities, rare and valuable, squandered away without any public utility. But when a gentleman with great visible emoluments abandons the party in which he has long acted, and tells you, it is because he proceeds upon his own judgment ; that he acts on the merits of the several measures as they arise ; and that he is obliged to follow his own conscience, and not that of others ; he gives reasons which it is impossible to controvert, and discovers a character which it is impossible to mistake¹. What shall we think of him who never differed from a certain set of men until the moment they lost their power, and who never agreed with them in a single instance afterwards ? Would not such a coinci-

¹ The cap seems to fit Field-Marshal H. S. Conway (1721-95), nephew of Sir Robert Walpole, and brother of the first Marquess of Hertford.

dence of interest and opinion be rather fortunate ? Would it not be an extraordinary cast upon the dice, that a man's connections should degenerate into faction, precisely at the critical moment when they lose their power, or he accepts a place ? When people desert their connections, the desertion is a manifest *fact*, upon which a direct simple issue lies, triable by plain men. Whether a *measure* of government be right or wrong, is *no matter of fact*, but a mere affair of opinion, on which men may, as they do, dispute and wrangle without end. But whether the individual *thinks* the measure right or wrong, is a point at still a greater distance from the reach of all human decision. It is therefore very convenient to politicians, not to put the judgment of their conduct on overt acts, cognizable in any ordinary court, but upon such matter as can be triable only in that secret tribunal, where they are sure of being heard with favour, or where at worst the sentence will be only private whipping.

I believe the reader would wish to find no substance in a doctrine which has a tendency to destroy all test of character as deduced from conduct. He will therefore excuse my adding something more, towards the further clearing up a point, which the great convenience of obscurity to dishonesty has been able to cover with some degree of darkness and doubt.

In order to throw an odium on political connection, these politicians suppose it a necessary incident to it, that you are blindly to follow the opinions of your party, when in direct opposition to your own clear ideas ; a degree of servitude that no worthy man could bear the thought of submitting to ; and such as, I believe, no connections (except some court factions) ever could

be so senselessly tyrannical as to impose. Men thinking freely, will, in particular instances, think differently. But still as the greater part of the measures which arise in the course of public business are related to, or dependent on, some great, *leading, general principles in government*, a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political company, if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten. If he does not concur in these general principles upon which the party is founded, and which necessarily draw on a concurrence in their application, he ought from the beginning to have chosen some other, more conformable to his opinions. When the question is in its nature doubtful, or not very material, the modesty which becomes an individual, and (in spite of our court moralists) that partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship, will frequently bring on an acquiescence in the general sentiment. Thus the disagreement will naturally be rare ; it will be only enough to indulge freedom, without violating concord, or disturbing arrangement. And this is all that ever was required for a character of the greatest uniformity and steadiness in connection. How men can proceed without any connection at all, is to me utterly incomprehensible. Of what sort of materials must that man be made, how must he be tempered and put together, who can sit whole years in Parliament, with five hundred and fifty of his fellow-citizens, amidst the storm of such tempestuous passions, in the sharp conflict of so many wits, and tempers, and characters, in the agitation of such mighty questions, in the discussion of such vast and ponderous interests, without seeing any one sort of men, whose character, conduct, or disposition, would lead him to associate himself with

them, to aid and be aided, in any one system of public utility ?

I remember an old scholastic aphorism, which says, that 'the man who lives wholly detached from others, must be either an angel or a devil.' When I see in any of these detached gentlemen of our times the angelic purity, power, and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the meantime we are born only to be men. We shall do enough if we form ourselves to be good ones. It is therefore our business carefully to cultivate in our minds, to rear to the most perfect vigour and maturity, every sort of generous and honest feeling, that belongs to our nature. To bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth ; so to be patriots, as not to forget we are gentlemen. To cultivate friendships, and to incur enmities. To have both strong, but both selected : in the one, to be placable ; in the other immovable. To model our principles to our duties and our situation. To be fully persuaded, that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious ; and rather to run the risk of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame, and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy ; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy.

There is, however, a time for all things. It is not every conjuncture which calls with equal force upon the activity of honest men ; but critical exigencies now and then arise ; and I am mistaken, if this be not one of them. Men will see the necessity of honest combination ; but they may see it when it is too late. They may embody, when it will be ruinous to

themselves, and of no advantage to the country ; when, for want of such a timely union^{as} may enable them to oppose in favour of the laws, with the laws on their side, they may at length find themselves under the necessity of conspiring, instead of consulting. The law, for which they stand, may become a weapon in the hands of its bitterest enemies ; and they will be cast, at length, into that miserable alternative between slavery and civil confusion, which no good man can look upon without horror ; an alternative in which it is impossible he should take either part, with a conscience perfectly at repose. To keep that situation of guilt and remorse at the utmost distance is, therefore, our first obligation. Early activity may prevent late and fruitless violence. As yet we work in the light. The scheme of the enemies of public tranquillity has disarranged, it has not destroyed us.

If the reader believes that there really exists such a faction as I have described ; a faction ruling by the private inclinations of a court, against the general sense of the people ; and that this faction, whilst it pursues a scheme for undermining all the foundations of our freedom, weakens (for the present at least) all the powers of executory government, rendering us abroad contemptible, and at home distracted ; he will believe also, that nothing but a firm combination of public men against this body, and that, too, supported by the hearty concurrence of the people at large, can possibly get the better of it. The people will see the necessity of restoring public men to an attention to the public opinion, and of restoring the constitution to its original principles. Above all, they will endeavour to keep the House of Commons from assuming a character which does not belong to it. They will endeavour

to keep that House, for its existence, for its powers, and its privileges, as independent of every other, and as dependent upon themselves, as possible. This servitude is to a House of Commons (like obedience to the Divine law) 'perfect freedom.' For if they once quit this natural, rational, and liberal obedience, having deserted the only proper foundation of their power, they must seek a support in an abject and unnatural dependence somewhere else. When, through the medium of this just connection with their constituents, the genuine dignity of the House of Commons is restored, it will begin to think of casting from it, with scorn, as badges of servility, all the false ornaments of illegal power, with which it has been, for some time, disgraced. It will begin to think of its old office of CONTROL. It will not suffer that last of evils to predominate in the country: men without popular confidence, public opinion, natural connection, or mutual trust, invested with all the powers of government.

When they have learned this lesson themselves, they will be willing and able to teach the court, that it is the true interest of the prince to have but one administration; and that one composed of those who recommend themselves to their sovereign through the opinion of their country, and not by their obsequiousness to a favourite. Such men will serve their sovereign with affection and fidelity; because his choice of them, upon such principles, is a compliment to their virtue. They will be able to serve him effectually; because they will add the weight of the country to the force of the executory power. They will be able to serve their king with dignity; because they will never abuse his name to the gratification of their private spleen or avarice. This, with allowances for human frailty, may prob-

ably be the general character of a ministry, which thinks itself accountable to the House of Commons ; when the House of Commons thinks itself accountable to its constituents. If other ideas should prevail, things must remain in their present confusion, until they are hurried into all the rage of civil violence, or until they sink into the dead repose of despotism.

OBSERVATIONS ON A LATE PUBLICATION

INTITULED

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE NATION

O Tite, si quid ego adjuvero curamve levasso,
Quæ nunc te coquit, et versat sub pectore fixa,
Ecquid erit pretii?

ENN. ap. CIO.

PARTY divisions, whether on the whole operating for good or evil, are things inseparable from free government. This is a truth which, I believe, admits little dispute, having been established by the uniform experience of all ages. The part a good citizen ought to take in these divisions has been a matter of much deeper controversy. But God forbid that any controversy relating to our essential morals should admit of no decision. It appears to me, that this question, like most of the others which regard our duties in life, is to be determined by our station in it. Private men may be wholly neutral, and entirely innocent: but they who are legally invested with public trust, or stand on the high ground of rank and dignity, which is trust implied, can hardly in any case remain indifferent, without the certainty of sinking into insignificance; and thereby in effect deserting that post in which, with the fullest authority, and for the wisest purposes, the laws and institutions of their country have fixed them. However, if it be the office of those who are

thus circumstanced, to take a decided part, it is no less their duty that it should be a sober one. It ought to be circumscribed by the same laws of decorum, and balanced by the same temper, which bound and regulate all the virtues. In a word, we ought to act in party with all the moderation which does not absolutely enervate that vigour, and quench that fervency of spirit, without which the best wishes for the public good must evaporate in empty speculation.

It is probably from some such motives that the friends of a very respectable party in this kingdom have been hitherto silent. For these two years past, from one and the same quarter of politics, a continual fire has been kept upon them ; sometimes from the unwieldy column of quartos and octavos ; sometimes from the light squadrons of occasional pamphlets and flying sheets. Every month has brought on its periodical calumny. The abuse has taken every shape which the ability of the writers could give it ; plain invective, clumsy raillery, misrepresented anecdote *. No method of vilifying the measures, the abilities, the intentions, or the persons which compose that body, has been omitted.

On their part nothing was opposed but patience and character. It was a matter of the most serious and indignant affliction to persons who thought themselves in conscience bound to oppose a ministry dangerous from its very constitution, as well as its measures, to find themselves, whenever they faced their adversaries, continually attacked on the rear by a set of men who pretended to be actuated by motives similar to theirs. They saw that the plan

* *History of the Minority. History of the Repeal of the Stamp Act. Considerations on Trade and Finance. Political Register, etc., etc.*

long pursued, with but too fatal a success, was to break the strength of this kingdom, by frittering down the bodies which compose it, by fomenting bitter and sanguinary animosities, and by dissolving every tie of social affection and public trust. These virtuous men, such I am warranted by public opinion to call them, were resolved rather to endure everything, than co-operate in that design. A diversity of opinion upon almost every principle of politics had indeed drawn a strong line of separation between them and some others. However, they were desirous not to extend the misfortune by unnecessary bitterness; they wished to prevent a difference of opinion on the commonwealth from festering into rancorous and incurable hostility. Accordingly they endeavoured that all past controversies should be forgotten; and that enough for the day should be the evil thereof. There is however a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. Men may tolerate injuries whilst they are only personal to themselves. But it is not the first of virtues to bear with moderation the indignities that are offered to our country. A piece has at length appeared, from the quarter of all the former attacks, which upon every public consideration demands an answer. Whilst persons more equal to this business may be engaged in affairs of greater moment, I hope I shall be excused, if, in a few hours of a time not very important, and from such materials as I have by me (more than enough however for this purpose), I undertake to set the facts and arguments of this wonderful performance in a proper light. I will endeavour to state what this piece is; the purpose for which I take it to have been written; and the effects (supposing it should have any effect at all) it must necessarily produce.

This piece is called *The Present State of the Nation*. It may be considered as a sort of digest of the avowed maxims of a certain political school, the effects of whose doctrines and practices this country will feel long and severely. It is made up of a farrago of almost every topic which has been agitated on national affairs in parliamentary debate, or private conversation, for these last seven years. The oldest controversies are hauled out of the dust with which time and neglect had covered them. Arguments ten times repeated, a thousand times answered before, are here repeated again. Public accounts formerly printed and reprinted revolve once more, and find their old station in this sober meridian. All the commonplace lamentations upon the decay of trade, the increase of taxes, and the high price of labour and provisions, are here retailed again and again in the same tone with which they have drawled through columns of Gazetteers and Advertisers for a century together. Paradoxes which affront common sense, and uninteresting barren truths which generate no conclusion, are thrown in to augment unwieldy bulk, without adding anything to weight. Because two accusations are better than one, contradictions are set staring one another in the face, without even an attempt to reconcile them. And, to give the whole a sort of portentous air of labour and information, the table of the House of Commons is swept into this grand reservoir of politics.

As to the composition, it bears a striking and whimsical resemblance to a funeral sermon, not only in the pathetic prayer with which it concludes, but in the style and tenor of the whole performance. It is piteously doleful, nodding every now and then towards dulness; well stored with pious frauds,

and, like most discourses of the sort, much better calculated for the private advantage of the preacher than the edification of the hearers.

The author has indeed so involved his subject, that it is frequently far from being easy to comprehend his meaning. It is happy for the public that it is never difficult to fathom his design. The apparent intention of this author is to draw the most aggravated, hideous and deformed picture of the state of this country, which his querulous eloquence, aided by the arbitrary dominion he assumes over fact, is capable of exhibiting. Had he attributed our misfortunes to their true cause, the injudicious tampering of bold, improvident, and visionary ministers at one period, or to their supine negligence and traitorous dissensions at another, the complaint had been just, and might have been useful. But far the greater and much the worst part of the state which he exhibits is owing, according to his representation, not to accidental and extrinsic mischiefs attendant on the nation, but to its radical weakness and constitutional distempers. All this however is not without purpose. The author is in hopes, that, when we are fallen into a fanatical terror for the national salvation, we shall then be ready to throw ourselves—in a sort of precipitate trust, some strange disposition of the mind jumbled up of presumption and despair—into the hands of the most pretending and forward undertaker. One such undertaker at least he has in readiness for our service. But let me assure this generous person, that however he may succeed in exciting our fears for the public danger, he will find it hard indeed to engage us to place any confidence in the system he proposes for our security.

His undertaking is great. The purpose of this

pamphlet, at which it aims directly or obliquely in every page, is to persuade the public of three or four of the most difficult points in the world—that all the advantages of the late war were on the part of the Bourbon alliance; that the peace of Paris perfectly consulted the dignity and interest of this country; and that the American Stamp Act was a masterpiece of policy and finance; that the only good minister this nation has enjoyed since his Majesty's accession, is the Earl of Bute; and the only good managers of revenue we have seen are Lord Despensers and Mr George Grenville; and, under the description of men of virtue and ability, he holds them out to us as the only persons fit to put our affairs in order. Let not the reader mistake me: he does not actually name these persons; but having highly applauded their conduct in all its parts, and heavily censured every other set of men in the kingdom, he then recommends us to his men of virtue and ability.

Such is the author's scheme. Whether it will answer his purpose I know not. But surely that purpose ought to be a wonderfully good one, to warrant the methods he has taken to compass it. If the facts and reasonings in this piece are admitted, it is all over with us. The continuance of our tranquillity depends upon the compassion of our rivals. Unable to secure to ourselves the advantages of peace, we are at the same time utterly unfit for war. It is impossible, if this state of things be credited abroad, that we can have any alliance; all nations will fly from so dangerous a connection, lest, instead of being partakers of our strength, they should only become sharers in our ruin. If it is believed at home, all that firmness of mind, and dignified national courage, which used to be the great support of this

isle against the powers of the world, must melt away, and fail within us.

In such a state of things can it be amiss if I aim at holding out some comfort to the nation ; another sort of comfort, indeed, than that which this writer provides for it ; a comfort not from its physician, but from its constitution : if I attempt to show that all the arguments upon which he founds the decay of that constitution, and the necessity of that physician, are vain and frivolous ? I will follow the author closely in his own long career, through the war, the peace, the finances, our trade, and our foreign politics : not for the sake of the particular measures which he discusses ; that can be of no use ; they are all decided ; their good is all enjoyed, or their evil incurred : but for the sake of the principles of war, peace, trade, and finances. These principles are of infinite moment. They must come again and again under consideration ; and it imports the public, of all things, that those of its ministers be enlarged, and just, and well confirmed, upon all these subjects. What notions this author entertains we shall see presently ; notions in my opinion very irrational, and extremely dangerous ; and which, if they should crawl from pamphlets into counsels, and be realized from private speculation into national measures, cannot fail of hastening and completing our ruin.

This author, after having paid his compliment to the showy appearances of the late war in our favour, is in the utmost haste to tell you that these appearances were *fallacious*, that they were no more than an *imposition*.—I fear I must trouble the reader with a pretty long quotation, in order to set before him the more clearly this author's peculiar way of conceiving and reasoning :

Happily (the K.) was then advised by ministers, who did not suffer themselves to be dazzled by the glare of brilliant appearances ; but, knowing them to be *fallacious*, they wisely resolved to profit of their splendour before our enemies should also *discover the imposition*.—The increase in the exports was found to have been occasioned chiefly by the demands of *our own fleets and armies*, and, instead of bringing wealth to the nation, was to be paid for by oppressive taxes upon the people of England. While the British seamen were consuming on board our men of war and privateers, foreign ships and foreign seamen were employed in the transportation of our merchandise ; and the carrying trade, so great a source of wealth and marine, *was entirely engrossed by the neutral nations*. The number of British ships annually arriving in our ports was reduced 1,756 sail, containing 92,559 tons, on a medium of the six years' war, compared with the six years of peace preceding it.—The conquest of the Havannah had, indeed, stopped the remittance of specie from Mexico to Spain ; but it had not enabled England to seize it : on the contrary, our merchants suffered by the detention of the galleons, as their *correspondents in Spain were disabled from paying them for their goods sent to America*. The loss of the trade to Old Spain was a further bar to an influx of specie ; and the attempt upon Portugal had not only deprived us of an import of bullion from thence, but the payment of our troops employed in its defence was a fresh drain opened for the diminution of our circulating specie.—The high premiums given for new loans had

sunk the price of the old stock near a third of its original value ; so that the purchasers had an obligation from the state to repay them with an addition of 33 per cent to their capital. Every new loan required new taxes to be imposed ; new taxes must add to the price of our manufactures, *and lessen their consumption among foreigners.* The decay of our trade must necessarily occasion a decrease of the public revenue ; and a deficiency of our funds must either be made up by fresh taxes, which would only add to the calamity, or our national credit must be destroyed, by showing the public creditors the inability of the nation to repay them their principal money.—Bounties had already been given for recruits which exceeded the year's wages of the ploughman and reaper ; and as these were exhausted, and *husbandry stood still for want of hands*, the manufacturers were next to be tempted to quit the anvil and the loom by higher offers.—*France, bankrupt France, had no such calamities impending over her ; her distresses were great, but they were immediate and temporary ; her want of credit preserved her from a great increase of debt, and the loss of her ultramarine dominions lessened her expenses. Her colonies had, indeed, put themselves into the hands of the English ; but the property of her subjects had been preserved by capitulations, and a way opened for making her those remittances which the war had before suspended, with as much security as in time of peace.*—Her armies in Germany had been hitherto prevented from seizing upon Hanover ; but they continued to encamp on the same ground on which the first battle was fought ; and, as it must ever happen from

the policy of that government, *the last troops she sent into the field were always found to be the best, and her frequent losses only served to fill her regiments with better soldiers. The conquest of Hanover became therefore every campaign more probable.*—It is to be noted, that the French troops received subsistence only, for the last three years of the war; and that, although large arrears were due to them at its conclusion, the charge was the less during its continuance. —Pages 6-10.

If any one be willing to see to how much greater lengths the author carries these ideas, he will recur to the book. This is sufficient for a specimen of his manner of thinking. I believe one reflection uniformly obtrudes itself upon every reader of these paragraphs. For what purpose, in any cause, shall we hereafter contend with France? Can we ever flatter ourselves that we shall wage a more successful war? If, on our part, in a war the most prosperous we ever carried on, by sea and by land, and in every part of the globe, attended with the unparalleled circumstance of an immense increase of trade and augmentation of revenue; if a continued series of disappointments, disgraces, and defeats, followed by public bankruptcy, on the part of France; if all these still leave her a gainer on the whole balance, will it not be downright frenzy in us ever to look her in the face again, or to contend with her any, even the most essential points, since victory and defeat, though by different ways, equally conduct us to our ruin? Subjection to France without a struggle will indeed be less for our honour, but on every principle of our author it must be more for our advantage. According to his representation of things the question is only concerning the most easy

fall. France had not discovered, our statesman tells us, at the end of that war, the triumphs of defeat, and the resources which are derived from bankruptcy. For my poor part, I do not wonder at their blindness. But the English ministers saw further. Our author has at length let foreigners also into the secret, and made them altogether as wise as ourselves. It is their own fault if (*vulgato imperii arcano*) they are imposed upon any longer. They now are apprised of the sentiments which the great candidate for the government of this great empire entertains; and they will act accordingly. They are taught our weakness and their own advantages.

He tells the world, that if France carries on the war against us in Germany, every loss she sustains contributes to the achievement of her conquest. If her armies are three years unpaid, she is the less exhausted by expense. If her credit is destroyed, she is the less oppressed with debt. If her troops are cut to pieces, they will by her policy (and a wonderful policy it is) be improved, and will be supplied with much better men. If the war is carried on in the colonies, he tells them that the loss of her ultramarine dominions lessens her expenses, and insures her remittances

Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro.

If so, what is it we can do to hurt her?; it will be all an *imposition*, all *fallacious*. Why, the result must be

Occidit, occidit
Spes omnis et fortuna nostri
Nominis.

The only way which the author's principles leave for our escape, is to reverse our condition into that of

France, and to take her losing cards into our hands. But though his principles drive him to it, his politics will not suffer him to walk on this ground. Talking at our ease and of other countries, we may bear to be diverted with such speculations ; but in England we shall never be taught to look upon the annihilation of our trade, the ruin of our credit, the defeat of our armies, and the loss of our ultramarine dominions (whatever the author may think of them), to be the high road to prosperity and greatness.

The reader does not, I hope, imagine that I mean seriously to set about the refutation of these uningenious paradoxes and reveries without imagination. I state them only that we may discern a little in the questions of war and peace, the most weighty of all questions, what is the wisdom of those men who are held out to us as the only hope of an expiring nation. The present ministry is indeed of a strange character: at once indolent and distracted. But if a ministerial system should be formed, actuated by such maxims as are avowed in this piece, the vices of the present ministry would become their virtues ; their indolence would be the greatest of all public benefits, and a distraction that entirely defeated every one of their schemes would be our only security from destruction.

To have stated these reasonings is enough, I presume, to do their business. But they are accompanied with facts and records, which may seem of a little more weight. I trust, however, that the facts of this author will be as far from bearing the touchstone, as his arguments. On a little inquiry, they will be found as great an imposition as the successes they are meant to depreciate ; for they are all either false or fallaciously applied ; or not in the least to the purpose for which they are produced.

First the author, in order to support his favourite paradox, that our possession of the French colonies was of no detriment to France, has thought proper to inform us, that 'they put themselves into the hands of the English.' He uses the same assertion, in nearly the same words, in another place; 'her colonies had put themselves into our hands.' Now, in justice, not only to fact and common sense, but to the incomparable valour and perseverance of our military and naval forces thus unhandsomely traduced, I must tell this author, that the French colonies did not 'put themselves into the hands of the English.' They were compelled to submit; they were subdued by dint of English valour. Will the five years' war carried on in Canada, in which fell one of the principal hopes of this nation, and all the battles lost and gained during that anxious period, convince this author of his mistake? Let him inquire of Sir Jeffery Amherst, under whose conduct that war was carried on; of Sir Charles Saunders, whose steadiness and presence of mind saved our fleet, and were so eminently serviceable in the whole course of the siege of Quebec; of General Monckton, who was shot through the body there, whether France 'put her colonies into the hands of the English.'

Though he has made no exception, yet I would be liberal to him; perhaps he means to confine himself to her colonies in the West Indies. But surely it will fare as ill with him there as in North America, whilst we remember that in our first attempt at Martinico we were actually defeated; that it was three months before we reduced Guadeloupe; and that the conquest of the Havannah was achieved by the highest conduct, aided by circumstances of the greatest good fortune. He

knows the expense both of men and treasure at which we bought that place. However, if it had so pleased the peacemakers, it was no dear purchase; for it was decisive of the fortune of the war and the terms of the treaty: the Duke of Nivernois thought so; France, England, Europe, considered it in that light; all the world, except the then friends of the then ministry, who wept for our victories, and were in haste to get rid of the burden of our conquests. This author knows that France did not put those colonies into the hands of England; but he well knows who did put the most valuable of them into the hands of France.

In the next place, our author is pleased to consider the conquest of those colonies in no other light than as a convenience for the remittances to France, which he asserts that the war had before suspended, but for which a way was opened (by our conquest) as secure as in time of peace. I charitably hope he knows nothing of the subject. I referred him lately to our commanders, for the resistance of the French colonies; I now wish he would apply to our custom-house entries, and our merchants, for the advantages which we derived from them.

In 1761, there was no entry of goods from any of the conquered places but Guadaloupe; in that year it stood thus:

Imports from Guadaloupe,	value, £482,179
In 1762, when we had not yet delivered up our conquests, the account was,	
Guadaloupe	£513,244
Martinico	288,425
<hr/>	
Total imports in 1762,	value, £801,669

In 1763, after we had delivered up the sovereignty of these islands, but kept open a communication with them, the imports were,

Guadaloupe	. . . . .	£412,303
Martinico	. . . . .	344,161
Havannah	. . . . .	249,386

Total imports in 1763, value, £1,005,850

Besides, I find, in the account of bullion imported and brought to the Bank, that, during that period in which the intercourse with the Havannah was open, we received at that one shop, in treasure, from that one place, £559,810; in the year 1763, £389,450; so that the import from these places in that year amounted to £1,395,300.

On this state the reader will observe, that I take the imports from, and not the exports to, these conquests, as the measure of the advantages which we derived from them. I do so for reasons which will be somewhat worthy the attention of such readers as are fond of this species of inquiry. I say therefore I choose the import article, as the best, and indeed the only standard we can have, of the value of the West India trade. Our export entry does not comprehend the greatest trade we carry on with any of the West India islands, the sale of negroes; nor does it give any idea of two other advantages we draw from them; the remittances for money spent here, and the payment of part of the balance of the North American trade. It is therefore quite ridiculous, to strike a balance merely on the face of an excess of imports and exports, in that commerce; though in most foreign branches, it is, on the whole, the best method. If we should take that standard,

it would appear, that the balance with our own islands is, annually, several hundred thousand pounds against this country *. Such is its aspect on the custom-house entries; but we know the direct contrary to be the fact. We know that the West-Indians are always indebted to our merchants, and that the value of every shilling of West India produce is English property. So that our import from them, and not our export, ought always to be considered as their true value; and this corrective ought to be applied to all general balances of our trade, which are formed on the ordinary principles.

If possible, this was more emphatically true of the French West India islands, whilst they continued in our hands. That none or only a very contemptible part, of the value of this produce could be remitted to France, the author will see, perhaps with unwillingness, but with the clearest conviction, if he considers, that in the year 1763, *after we had ceased to export* to the isles of Guadaloupe and Martinico, and to the Havannah, and after the colonies were free to send all their produce to Old France and Spain, if they had any remittance to make; he will see, that we imported from those places, in that year, to the amount of £1,395,300. So far was the whole annual produce of these islands from being adequate to the payments of their annual call upon us, that this mighty additional importation was necessary,

* Total imports from the West Indies in	
1764	£2,909,411
Exports to ditto in ditto	896,511

Excess of imports	£2,012,900
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In this, which is the common way of stating the balance, it will appear upwards of two millions against us, which is ridiculous.

though not quite sufficient, to discharge the debts contracted in the few years we held them. The property, therefore, of their whole produce was ours ; not only during the war, but even for more than a year after the peace. The author, I hope, will not again venture upon so rash and discouraging a proposition concerning the nature and effect of those conquests, as to call them a convenience to the remittances of France ; he sees, by this account, that what he asserts is not only without foundation, but even impossible to be true.

As to our trade at that time, he labours with all his might to represent it as absolutely ruined, or on the very edge of ruin. Indeed, as usual with him, he is often as equivocal in his expression as he is clear in his design. Sometimes he more than insinuates a decay of our commerce in that war ; sometimes he admits an increase of exports ; but it is in order to depreciate the advantages we might appear to derive from that increase, whenever it should come to be proved against him. He tells you, ' that it was chiefly occasioned by the demands of our own fleets and armies, and, instead of bringing wealth to the nation, was to be paid for by oppressive taxes upon the people of England.' Never was anything more destitute of foundation. It might be proved, with the greatest ease, from the nature and quality of the goods exported, as well as from the situation of the places to which our merchandise was sent, and which the war could no wise affect, that the supply of our fleets and armies could not have been the cause of this wonderful increase of trade : its cause was evident to the whole world ; the ruin of the trade of France, and our possession of her colonies. What wonderful effects this cause produced the

reader will see below * ; and he will form on that account some judgment of the author's candour or information.

Admit however that a great part of our export, though nothing is more remote from fact, was owing to the supply of our fleets and armies ; was it not something ? ; was it not peculiarly fortunate for a nation, that she was able from her own bosom to contribute largely to the supply of her armies militating in so many distant countries ? The author allows that France did not enjoy the same advantages.

1754.	£	s.	d.
* Total export of British goods, value,	8,317,506	15	3
Ditto of foreign goods in time	2,910,836	14	9
Ditto of ditto out of time	559,485	2	10
Total exports of all kinds	11,787,828	12	10
Total imports	8,093,472	15	0
Balance in favour of England	£3,694,355	17	10
1761.	£	s.	d.
Total export of British goods	10,649,581	12	6
Ditto of foreign goods in time	3,553,692	7	1
Ditto of ditto out of time	355,015	0	2
Total exports of all kinds	14,558,288	19	9
Total imports	9,294,915	1	6
Balance in favour of England	£5,263,373	18	3

Here is the state of our trade in 1761, compared with a very good year of profound peace : both are taken from the authentic entries at the custom-house. How the author can contrive to make this increase of the export of English produce agree with his account of the dreadful want of hands in England, page 9, unless he supposes manufactures to be made without hands, I really do not see. It is painful to be so frequently obliged to set this author right in matters of fact. This state will fully refute all that he has said or insinuated upon the difficulties and decay of our trade.

But it is remarkable, throughout his whole book, that those circumstances which have ever been considered as great benefits, and decisive proofs of national superiority, are, when in our hands, taken either in diminution of some other apparent advantage, or even sometimes as positive misfortunes. The optics of that politician must be of a strange conformation, who beholds everything in this distorted shape.

So far as to our trade. With regard to our navigation, he is still more uneasy at our situation, and still more fallacious in his state of it. In his text, he affirms it 'to have been *entirely* engrossed by the neutral nations.' This he asserts roundly and boldly, and without the least concern ; although it cost no more than a single glance of the eye upon his own margin to see the full refutation of this assertion. His own account proves against him, that, in the year 1761, the British shipping amounted to 527,557 tons,—the foreign to no more than 180,102. The medium of his six years' British, 2,449,555 tons,—foreign only 906,690. This state (his own) demonstrates that the neutral nations did not *entirely* engross our navigation.

I am willing from a strain of candour to admit that this author speaks at random ; that he is only slovenly and inaccurate, and not fallacious. In matters of account, however, this want of care is not excusable ; and the difference between neutral nations *entirely* engrossing our navigation, and being only subsidiary to a vastly augmented trade, makes a most material difference to his argument. From that principle of fairness, though the author speaks otherwise, I am willing to suppose he means no more than that our navigation had so declined as to alarm us with the probable loss of this valu-

able object. I shall however show, that his whole proposition, whatever modifications he may please to give it, is without foundation ; that our navigation had not decreased ; that, on the contrary, it had greatly increased in the war ; that it had increased by the war ; and that it was probable the same cause would continue to augment it to a still greater height ; to what an height it is hard to say, had our success continued.

But first I must observe, I am much less solicitous whether his fact be true or no, than whether his principle is well established. Cases are dead things, principles are living and productive. I affirm then, that, if in time of war our trade had the good fortune to increase, and at the same time a large, nay the largest, proportion of carriage had been engrossed by neutral nations, it ought not in itself to have been considered as a circumstance of distress. War is a time of inconvenience to trade ; in general it must be straitened, and must find its way as it can. It is often happy for nations that they are able to call in neutral navigation. They all aim at it. France endeavoured at it, but could not compass it. Will this author say, that, in a war with Spain, such an assistance would not be of absolute necessity ? that it would not be the most gross of all follies to refuse it ? In the next place, his method of stating a medium of six years of war, and six years of peace, to decide this question, is altogether unfair. To say, in derogation of the advantages of a war, that navigation is not equal to what it was in time of peace, is what hitherto has never been heard of. No war ever bore that test but the war which he so bitterly laments. One may lay it down as a maxim, that an average estimate of an object in a steady course of rising or of falling, must

in its nature be an unfair one ; more particularly if the cause of the rise or fall be visible, and its continuance in any degree probable. Average estimates are never just but when the object fluctuates, and no reason can be assigned why it should not continue still to fluctuate. The author chooses to allow nothing at all for this : he has taken an average of six years of the war. He knew, for everybody knows, that the first three years were on the whole rather unsuccessful ; and that, in consequence of this ill success, trade sunk, and navigation declined with it ; but *that grand delusion* of the three last years turned the scale in our favour. At the beginning of that war (as in the commencement of every war), traders were struck with a sort of panic. Many went out of the freighting business. But by degrees, as the war continued, the terror wore off ; the danger came to be better appreciated, and better provided against ; our trade was carried on in large fleets, under regular convoys, and with great safety. The freighting business revived. The ships were fewer, but much larger ; and though the number decreased, the tonnage was vastly augmented : insomuch that in 1761 the *British* shipping had risen by the author's own account to 527,557 tons.—In the last year he has given us of the peace, it amounted to no more than 494,772 ; that is, in the last year of the war it was 32,785 tons more than in the correspondent year of his peace average. No year of the peace exceeded it except one, and that but little.

The fair account of the matter is this. Our trade had, as we have just seen, increased to so astonishing a degree in 1761, as to employ British and foreign ships to the amount of 707,659 tons, which is 149,500 more than we employed in the last year of the peace.—Thus our trade increased

more than a fifth ; our British navigation had increased likewise with this astonishing increase of trade, but was not able to keep pace with it ; and we added about 120,000 tons of foreign shipping to the 60,000, which had been employed in the last year of the peace. Whatever happened to our shipping in the former years of the war, this would be no true state of the case at the time of the treaty. If we had lost something in the beginning, we had then recovered, and more than recovered, all our losses. Such is the ground of the doleful complaints of the author, that *the carrying trade was wholly engrossed by the neutral nations.*

I have done fairly, and even very moderately, in taking this year, and not his average, as the standard of what might be expected in future, had the war continued. The author will be compelled to allow it, unless he undertakes to show ; first that the possession of Canada, Martinico, Guadaloupe, Grenada, the Havannah, the Philippines, the whole African trade, the whole East India trade, and the whole Newfoundland fishery, had no certain inevitable tendency to increase the British shipping ; unless, in the second place, he can prove that those trades were, or might be, by law or indulgence, carried on in foreign vessels ; and unless, thirdly, he can demonstrate that the premium of insurance on British ships was rising as the war continued. He can prove not one of these points. I will show him a fact more that is mortal to his assertions. It is the state of our shipping in 1762. The author had his reasons for stopping short at the preceding year. It would have appeared, had he proceeded farther, that our tonnage was in a course of uniform augmentation, owing to the freight derived from our foreign conquests,

and to the perfect security of our navigation from our clear and decided superiority at sea. This, I say, would have appeared from the state of the two years

1761.	British	.	.	.	.	.	527,557 tons.
1762.	Ditto	.	.	.	.	.	559,537 tons.
1761.	Foreign	.	.	.	.	.	180,102 tons.
1762.	Ditto	.	.	.	.	.	129,502 tons.

The two last years of the peace were in no degree equal to these. Much of the navigation of 1763 was also owing to the war; this is manifest from the large part of it employed in the carriage from the ceded islands, with which the communication still continued open. No such circumstances of glory and advantage ever attended upon a war. Too happy will be our lot, if we should again be forced into a war, to behold anything that shall resemble them; and if we were not then the better for them, it is not in the ordinary course of God's providence to mend our condition.

In vain does the author declaim on the high premiums given for the loans during the war. His long note swelled with calculations on that subject (even supposing the most inaccurate of all calculations to be just) would be entirely thrown away, did it not serve to raise a wonderful opinion of his financial skill in those who are not less surprised than edified when, with a solemn face and mysterious air, they are told that two and two make four. For what else do we learn from this note? That the more expense is incurred by a nation, the more money will be required to defray it; that in proportion to the continuance of that expense, will be the continuance of borrowing; that the increase of borrowing and the increase of debt will go hand in hand; and lastly, that the more money you want, the harder it will be

to get it ; and that the scarcity of the commodity will enhance the price. Who ever doubted the truth or the insignificance, of these propositions ? ; what do they prove ? : that war is expensive, and peace desirable. They contain nothing more than a commonplace against war ; the easiest of all topics. To bring them home to his purpose, he ought to have shown that our enemies had money upon better terms ; which he has not shown, neither can he. I shall speak more fully to this point in another place. He ought to have shown that the money they raised, upon whatever terms, had procured them a more lucrative return. He knows that our expenditure purchased commerce and conquest : theirs acquired nothing but defeat and bankruptcy.

Thus the author has laid down his ideas on the subject of war. Next follow those he entertains on that of peace. The treaty of Paris upon the whole has his approbation. Indeed, if his account of the war be just, he might have spared himself all further trouble. The rest is drawn on as an inevitable conclusion. If the House of Bourbon had the advantage, she must give the law ; and the peace, though it were much worse than it is, had still been a good one. But as the world is yet *deceived* on the state of that war, other arguments are necessary ; and the author has in my opinion very ill supplied them. He tells of many things we have got, and of which he has made out a kind of bill. This matter may be brought within a very narrow compass, if we come to consider the requisites of a good peace under some plain distinct heads. I apprehend they may be reduced to these : 1. Stability ; 2. Indemnification ; 3. Alliance.

As to the first, the author more than obscurely hints in several places, that he thinks the peace not

likely to last. However, he does furnish a security ; a security, in any light, I fear, but insufficient ; on his hypothesis, surely a very odd one. ' By stipulating for the entire possession of the Continent (says he) the restored French islands are becoming in some measure dependent on the British empire ; and the good faith of France on observing the treaty guaranteed by the value at which she estimates their possession.' This author soon grows weary of his principles. They seldom last him for two pages together. When the advantages of the war were to be depreciated, then the loss of the ultramarine colonies lightened the expenses of France, facilitated her remittances, and therefore *her colonists put them into our hands*. According to this author's system, the actual possession of those colonies ought to give us little or no advantage in the negotiation for peace ; and yet the chance of possessing them on a future occasion gives a perfect security for the preservation of that peace. The conquest of the Havannah, if it did not serve Spain, rather distressed England, says our author. But the molestation which her galleons may suffer from our station in Pensacola gives us advantages, for which we were not allowed to credit the nation for the Havannah itself ; a place surely full as well situated for every external purpose as Pensacola, and of more internal benefit than ten thousand Pensacolas.

The author sets very little by conquests ; I suppose it is because he makes them so very lightly. On this subject he speaks with the greatest certainty imaginable. We have, according to him, nothing to do, but to go and take possession, whenever we think proper, of the French and Spanish settlements. It were better that he had examined a little what advantage the peace gave us towards the

invasion of these colonies, which we did not possess before the peace. It would not have been amiss if he had consulted the public experience, and our commanders, concerning the absolute certainty of those conquests on which he is pleased to found our security. And if, after all, he should have discovered them to be so very sure, and so very easy, he might at least, to preserve consistency, have looked a few pages back, and (no unpleasing thing to him) listened to himself, where he says, that 'the most successful enterprise could not compensate to the nation for the waste of its people by carrying on war in unhealthy climates.' So that, according to himself, his security is not worth the suit; according to fact, he has only a chance, God knows what a chance, of getting at it; and therefore, according to reason, the giving up the most valuable of all possessions, in hopes to conquer them back, under any advantage of situation, is the most ridiculous security that ever was imagined for the peace of a nation. It is true his friends did not give up Canada; they could not give up everything; let us make the most of it. We have Canada, we know its value. We have not the French any longer to fight in North America; and from this circumstance we derive considerable advantages. But here let me rest a little. The author touches upon a string which sounds under his fingers but a tremulous and melancholy note. North America was once indeed a great strength to this nation, in opportunity of ports, in ships, in provisions, in men. We found her a sound, an active, a vigorous member of the empire. I hope, by wise management, she will again become so. But one of our capital present misfortunes is her discontent and disobedience. To which of the author's

favourites this discontent is owing, we all know but too sufficiently. It would be a dismal event, if this foundation of his security, and indeed of all our public strength, should, in reality, become our weakness; and if all the powers of this empire, which ought to fall with a compacted weight upon the head of our enemies, should be dissipated and distracted by a jealous vigilance, or by hostile attempts upon one another. Ten Canadas cannot restore that security for the peace, and for everything valuable to this country, which we have lost along with the affection and the obedience of our colonies. He is the wise minister, he is the true friend to Britain, who shall be able to restore it.

To return to the security for the peace. The author tells us, that the original great purposes of the war were more than accomplished by the treaty. Surely he has experience and reading enough to know, that, in the course of a war, events may happen, that render its original very far from being its principal purpose. This original may dwindle by circumstances, so as to become not a purpose of the second or even the third magnitude. I trust this is so obvious that it will not be necessary to put cases for its illustration. In that war, as soon as Spain entered into the quarrel, the security of North America was no longer the sole nor the foremost object. The *Family Compact* had been I know not how long before in agitation. But then it was that we saw produced into daylight and action the most odious and most formidable of all the conspiracies against the liberties of Europe that ever has been framed. The war with Spain was the first fruits of that league; and a security against that league ought to have been the fundamental point of a pacification with the powers who compose

it. We had materials in our hands to have constructed that security in such a manner as never to be shaken. But how did the virtuous and able men of our author labour for this great end ? They took no one step towards it. On the contrary they countenanced, and, indeed, as far as it depended on them, recognized it in all its parts ; for our plenipotentiary treated with those who acted for the two crowns, as if they had been different ministers of the same monarch. The Spanish minister received his instructions, not from Madrid, but from Versailles.

This was not hid from our ministers at home ; and the discovery ought to have alarmed them, if the good of their country had been the object of their anxiety. They could not but have seen that the whole Spanish monarchy was melted down into the cabinet of Versailles. But they thought this circumstance an advantage ; as it enabled them to go through with their work the more expeditiously. Expedition was everything to them ; because France might happen during a protracted negotiation to discover the great imposition of our victories.

In the same spirit they negotiated the terms of the peace. If it were thought advisable not to take any positive security from Spain, the most obvious principles of policy dictated that the burden of the cessions ought to fall upon France ; and that everything which was of grace and favour should be given to Spain. Spain could not, on her part, have executed a capital article in the family compact, which obliged her to compensate the losses of France. At least she could not do it in America ; for she was expressly precluded by the treaty of Utrecht from ceding any territory or giving any advantage in trade to that power. What did our ministers ?

They took from Spain the territory of Florida, an object of no value except to show our dispositions to be quite equal at least towards both powers ; and they enabled France to compensate Spain by the gift of Louisiana ; loading us with all the harshness, leaving the act of kindness with France, and opening thereby a door to the fulfilling of this the most consolidating article of the family compact. Accordingly that dangerous league, thus abetted and authorized by the English ministry without an attempt to invalidate it in any way, or in any of its parts, exists to this hour ; and has grown stronger and stronger every hour of its existence.

As to the second component of a good peace, *compensation*, I have but little trouble ; the author has said nothing upon that head. He has nothing to say. After a war of such expense, this ought to have been a capital consideration. But on what he has been so prudently silent, I think it is right to speak plainly. All our new acquisitions together, at this time, scarce afford matter of revenue, either at home or abroad, sufficient to defray the expense of their establishments ; not one shilling towards the reduction of our debt. Guadaloupe or Martinico alone would have given us material aid ; much in the way of duties, much in the way of trade and navigation. A good ministry would have considered how a renewal of the *Assiento* might have been obtained. We had as much right to ask it at the treaty of Paris as at the treaty of Utrecht. We had incomparably more in our hands to purchase it. Floods of treasure would have poured into this kingdom from such a source ; and, under proper management, no small part of it would have taken a public direction, and have fructified an exhausted exchequer.

If this gentleman's hero of finance, instead of flying from a treaty, which, though he now defends, he could not approve, and would not oppose ; if he, instead of shifting into an office, which removed him from the manufacture of the treaty, had, by his credit with the then great director, acquired for us these, or any of these, objects, the possession of Guadaloupe or Martinico, or the renewal of the *Assiento*, he might have held his head high in his country ; because he would have performed real service ; ten thousand times more real service, than all the economy of which this writer is perpetually talking, or all the little tricks of finance which the expertest juggler of the treasury can practise, could amount to in a thousand years. But the occasion is lost ; the time is gone, perhaps forever.

As to the third requisite, *alliance*, there too the author is silent. What strength of that kind did they acquire ? They got no one new ally ; they stript the enemy of not a single old one. They disgusted (how justly, or unjustly, matters not) every ally we had ; and from that time to this we stand friendless in Europe. But of this naked condition of their country I know some people are not ashamed. They have their system of politics ; our ancestors grew great by another. In this manner these virtuous men concluded the peace ; and their practice is only consonant to their theory.

Many things more might be observed on this curious head of our author's speculations. But, taking leave of what the writer says in his serious part, if he be serious in any part, I shall only just point out a piece of his pleasantry. No man, I believe, ever denied that the time for making peace is that in which the best terms may be obtained. But what that time is, together with the use that

has been made of it, we are to judge by seeing whether terms adequate to our advantages, and to our necessities, have been actually obtained. Here is the pinch of the question, to which the author ought to have set his shoulders in earnest. Instead of doing this, he slips out of the harness by a jest ; and sneeringly tells us, that, to determine this point, we must know the secrets of the French and Spanish cabinets *, and that Parliament was pleased to approve the treaty of peace without calling for the correspondence concerning it. How just this sarcasm on that Parliament may be, I say not ; but how becoming in the author, I leave it to his friends to determine.

Having thus gone through the questions of war and peace, the author proceeds to state our debt, and the interest which it carried, at the time of the treaty, with the unfairness and inaccuracy, however, which distinguish all his assertions, and all his calculations. To detect every fallacy, and rectify every mistake, would be endless. It will be enough to point out a few of them, in order to show how unsafe it is to place anything like an implicit trust in such a writer.

The interest of debts contracted during the war is stated by the author at £2,614,892. Among them

* Something however has transpired in the quarrels among those concerned in that transaction. It seems the *good Genius* of Britain, so much vaunted by our author, did his duty nobly. Whilst we were gaining such advantages, the court of France was astonished at our concessions. ' J'ai apporté à Versailles, il est vrai, les Ratifications du Roi d'Angleterre, à votre grand étonnement, et à celui de bien d'autres. Je dois cela au bontés du Roi d'Angleterre, à celles de Milord Bute, à Mons. le Comte de Viry, à Mons. le Duc de Nivernois, et enfin à mon scavoir faire.'—*Lettres, etc.*, du Chev. D'Eon, p. 51.

is stated the unfunded debt, £9,975,017, supposed to carry interest on a medium at 3 per cent, which amounts to £299,250. We are referred to the *Considerations on the Trade and Finances of the Kingdom*, p. 22, for the particulars of that unfunded debt. Turn to the work, and to the place referred to by the author himself, if you have a mind to see a clear detection of a capital fallacy of this article in his account. You will there see that this unfunded debt consists of the nine following articles: the remaining subsidy to the Duke of Brunswick; the remaining *dédommagement* to the Landgrave of Hesse; the German demands; the army and ordnance extraordinaries; the deficiencies of grants and funds; Mr Touchet's claim; the debts due to Nova Scotia and Barbadoes; exchequer bills; and navy debt. The extreme fallacy of this state cannot escape any reader who will be at the pains to compare the interest money, with which he affirms us to have been loaded, in his *State of the Nation*, with the items of the principal debt to which he refers in his *Considerations*. The reader must observe, that of this long list of nine articles, only two, the exchequer bills, and part of the navy debt, carried any interest at all. The first amounted to £1,800,000; and this undoubtedly carried interest. The whole navy debt indeed amounted to £4,576,915; but of this only a *part* carried interest. The author of the *Considerations* labours to prove this very point in p. 18; and Mr G. has always defended himself upon the same ground, for the insufficient provision he made for the discharge of that debt. The reader may see their own authority for it.*

* 'The navy bills are not due till six months after they have been issued; six months also of the seamen's wages by Act of Parliament must be, and

Mr G. did in fact provide no more than £2,150,000 for the discharge of these bills in two years. It is much to be wished that these gentlemen would lay their heads together, that they would consider well this matter, and agree upon something. For when the scanty provision made for the unfunded debt is to be vindicated, then we are told it is a very *small part* of that debt which carries interest. But when the public is to be represented in a miserable condition, and the consequences of the late war to be laid before us in dreadful colours, then we are to be told that the unfunded debt is within a trifle of ten millions, and so large a portion of it carries interest that we must not compute less than 3 per cent. upon the *whole*.

In the year 1764, Parliament voted £650,000 towards the discharge of the navy debt. This sum

in consequence of the rules prescribed by that act, twelve months' wages generally, and often much more are retained; and there has been besides at all times a large arrear of pay, which, though kept in the account, could never be claimed, the persons to whom it was due having left neither assignees nor representatives. The precise amount of such sums cannot be ascertained; but they can hardly be reckoned less than thirteen or fourteen hundred thousand pounds. On Dec. 31, 1754, when the navy debt was reduced nearly as low as it could be, it still amounted to £1,296,567 18s. 11½d., consisting chiefly of articles which could not then be discharged; such articles will be larger now, in proportion to the increase of the establishment; and an allowance must always be made for them in judging of the state of the navy debt, though they are not distinguishable in the account. In providing for that which is payable, the principal object of the legislature is always to discharge the bills, for they are the greatest article; they bear an interest of 4 per cent; and, when the quantity of them is large, they are a heavy incumbrance upon all money transactions.'

could not be applied solely to the discharge of bills carrying interest ; because part of the debt due on seamen's wages must have been paid, and some bills carried no interest at all. Notwithstanding this, we find by an account in the journals of the House of Commons, in the following session, that the navy debt carrying interest was, on December 31, 1764, no more than £1,687,442. I am sure therefore that I admit too much when I admit the navy debt carrying interest, after the creation of the navy annuities in the year 1763, to have been £2,200,000. Add the exchequer bills ; and the whole unfunded debt carrying interest will be four millions instead of ten ; and the annual interest paid for it at 4 per cent. will be £160,000 instead of £299,250. An error of no small magnitude, and which could not have been owing to inadvertency.

The misrepresentation of the increase of the peace establishment is still more extraordinary than that of the interest of the unfunded debt. The increase is great, undoubtedly. However, the author finds no fault with it, and urges it only as a matter of argument to support the strange chimerical proposals he is to make us in the close of his work for the increase of revenue. The greater he made that establishment, the stronger he expected to stand in argument : but, whatever he expected or proposed, he should have stated the matter fairly. He tells us that this establishment is nearly £1,500,000 more than it was in 1752, 1753, and other years of peace. This he has done in his usual manner, by assertion, without troubling himself either with proof or probability. For he has not given us any state of the peace establishment in the years 1753 and 1754, the time which he means to compare with

the present. As I am obliged to force him to that precision, from which he always flies as from his most dangerous enemy, I have been at the trouble to search the journals in the period between the two last wars: and I find that the peace establishment, consisting of the navy, the ordnance, and the several incidental expenses, amounted to £2,346,594. Now is this writer wild enough to imagine, that the peace establishment of 1764 and the subsequent years, made up from the same articles, is £3,800,000 and upwards? His assertion however goes to this. But I must take the liberty of correcting him in this gross mistake, and from an authority he cannot refuse, from his favourite work, and standing authority, the *Considerations*. We find there, p. 43^{*}, the peace establishment of 1764 and 1765 stated at £3,609,700. This is near two hundred thousand pounds less than that given in *The State of the Nation*. But even from this, in order to render the articles which compose the peace establishment in the two periods correspondent (for otherwise they cannot be compared), we must deduct first, his articles of

* Navy	£1,450,900
Army	1,268,500
Ordnance	174,600
The four American governments	19,200
General surveys in America . .	1,600
Foundling Hospital	38,000
To the African committee . . .	13,000
For the civil establishment on the coast of Africa	5,500
Militia	100,000
Deficiency of land and malt . .	300,000
Deficiency of funds	202,400
Extraordinaries of the army and navy	35,000
Total	£3,609,700

the deficiency of land and malt, which amount to £300,000. They certainly are no part of the establishment; nor are they included in that sum, which I have stated above for the establishment in the time of the former peace. If they were proper to be stated at all, they ought to be stated in both accounts. We must also deduct the deficiencies of funds, £202,400. These deficiencies are the difference between the interest charged on the public for moneys borrowed, and the produce of the taxes laid for the discharge of that interest. Annual provision is indeed to be made for them by Parliament: but in the inquiry before us, which is only what charge is brought on the public by interest paid or to be paid for money borrowed, the utmost that the author should do is to bring into the account the full interest for all that money. This he has done in the very page I am now examining—£2,614,892. To comprehend afterwards in the peace establishment the deficiency of the fund created for payment of that interest, would be laying twice to the account of the war part of the same sum. Suppose ten millions borrowed at 4 per cent, and the fund for payment of the interest to produce no more than £200,000. The whole annual charge on the public is £400,000. It can be no more. But to charge the interest in one part of the account, and then the deficiency in the other, would be charging £600,000. The deficiency of funds must therefore be also deducted from the peace establishment in the *Considerations*; and then the peace establishment in that author will be reduced to the same articles with those included in the sum I have already mentioned for the peace establishment before the last war, in the year 1753, and 1754.

Peace establishment in the <i>Considerations</i>	£3,609,700
Deduct deficiency of land and malt	£300,000
Ditto of funds	202,400
	<hr/> 502,400
	<hr/> 3,107,300
Peace establishment before the late war, in which no deficiencies of land and malt, or funds are included	2,346,594
	<hr/>
Difference	£760,706

Being about half the sum which our author has been pleased to suppose it.

Let us put the whole together. The author states

Difference of peace establishment before and since the war	£1,500,000
Interest of debt contracted by the war . . .	2,614,892
	<hr/> 4,114,892
The <i>real</i> difference in the peace estab- lishment is	£760,706
The actual interest of the funded debt, in- cluding that charged on the sinking fund	£2,315,642
The actual interest of unfunded debt at most	160,000
	<hr/>
Total interest of debt contracted by the war	2,475,642
Increase of peace establishment, and interest of new debt	3,236,348
	<hr/>
Error of the author	£878,544

It is true, the extraordinaries of the army have been found considerably greater than the author of the *Considerations* was pleased to foretell they would be. The author of *The Present State* avails himself of that increase, and, finding it suit his purpose, sets the whole down in the peace estab-

lishment of the present times. If this is allowed him, his error perhaps may be reduced to £700,000. But I doubt the author of the *Considerations* will not thank him for admitting £200,000 and upwards, as the peace establishment for extraordinaries, when that author has so much laboured to confine them within £35,000.

These are some of the capital fallacies of the author. To break the thread of my discourse as little as possible, I have thrown into the margin many instances, though God knows far from the whole of his inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and want of common care. I think myself obliged to take some notice of them, in order to take off from any authority this writer may have; and to put an end to the deference which careless men are apt to pay to one who boldly arrays his accounts, and marshals his figures, in perfect confidence that their correctness will never be examined*.

* Upon the money borrowed in 1760, the premium of one per cent. was for twenty-one years, not for twenty; this annuity has been paid eight years instead of seven; the sum paid is therefore £640,000 instead of £560,000; the remaining term is worth ten years and a quarter instead of eleven years; its value is £820,000 instead of £880,000; and the whole value of that premium is £1,460,000 instead of £1,440,000. The like errors are observable in his computation on the additional capital of three per cent. on the loan of that year. In like manner, on the loan of 1762, the author computes on five years' payment instead of six; and says in express terms, that take 5 from 19, and there remain 13. These are not errors of the pen or the press; the several computations pursued in this part of the work with great diligence and earnestness prove them errors upon much deliberation. Thus the premiums in 1759 are cast up £90,000 too little, an error in the first rule of arithmetic. 'The annuities borrowed in 1756 and 1758 are', says he, 'to continue till redeemed by Parliament.' He does not

However, for argument, I am content to take his state of it. The debt was and is enormous. The war was expensive. The best economy had not perhaps been used. But I must observe, that war and economy are things not easily reconciled ; and that the attempt of leaning towards parsimony in such a state may be the worst management, and in the end the worst economy in the world, hazarding the total loss of all the charge incurred, and of everything along with it.

But *cui bono* all this detail of our debt ? Has the author given a single light towards any material reduction of it ? Not a glimmering. We shall see in its place what sort of thing he proposes. But before he commences his operations, in order to scare the public imagination, he raises by art magic a thick mist before our eyes, through which glare the most ghastly and horrible phantoms :

Hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesse est,
Non radii solis, neque lucida tela diei
Discutiant, sed naturæ species ratioque.

take notice that the first are irredeemable till February, 1771, the other till July, 1782. In this the amount of the premiums is computed on the time which they have run. Weakly and ignorantly ; for he might have added to this, and strengthened his argument, such as it is, by charging also the value of the additional one per cent. from the day on which he wrote, to at least that day on which these annuities become redeemable. To make ample amends, however, he has added to the premiums of 15 per cent. in 1759, and three per cent. in 1760, the annuity paid for them since their commencement ; the fallacy of which is manifest : for the premiums in these cases can be neither more nor less than the additional capital for which the public stands engaged, and is just the same whether five or five hundred years' annuity has been paid for it. In private life, no man persuades himself that he has borrowed £200 because he happens to have paid twenty years' interest on a loan of £100.

Let us therefore calmly, if we can for the fright into which he has put us, appreciate those dreadful and deformed gorgons and hydras, which inhabit the joyless region of an imagination fruitful in nothing but the production of monsters.

His whole representation is founded on the supposed operation of our debt, upon our manufactures, and our trade. To this cause he attributes a certain supposed dearness of the necessaries of life, which must compel our manufacturers to emigrate to cheaper countries, particularly to France, and with them the manufacture. Thence consumption declining, and with it revenue. He will not permit the real balance of our trade to be estimated so high as £2,500,000; and the interest of the debt to foreigners carries off £1,500,000 of that balance. France is not in the same condition. Then follow his wailings and lamentings, which he renews over and over, according to his custom—a declining trade, and decreasing specie—on the point of becoming tributary to France—of losing Ireland—of having the colonies torn away from us.

The first thing upon which I shall observe is, what he takes for granted as the clearest of all propositions, the emigration of our manufacturers to France. I undertake to say that this assertion is totally groundless, and I challenge the author to bring any sort of proof of it. If living is cheaper in France, that is, to be had for less specie, wages are proportionably lower. No manufacturer, let the living be what it will, was ever known to fly for refuge to low wages. Money is the first thing which attracts him. Accordingly our wages attract artificers from all parts of the world. From two shillings to one shilling is a fall in all men's imaginations, which no calculation upon a difference in the

price of the necessaries of life can compensate. But it will be hard to prove that a French artificer is better fed, clothed, lodged, and warmed, than one in England; for that is the sense, and the only sense, of living cheaper. If, in truth and fact, our artificer fares as well in all these respects as one in the same state in France, how stands the matter in point of opinion and prejudice, the springs by which people in that class of life are chiefly actuated? The idea of our common people concerning French living is dreadful; altogether as dreadful as our author's can possibly be of the state of his own country; a way of thinking that will hardly ever prevail on them to desert to France*.

But, leaving the author's speculations, the fact is, that they have not deserted; and of course the manufacture cannot be departed, or departing, with them. I am not indeed able to get at all the details of our manufactures; though, I think, I have taken full as much pains for that purpose as our author. Some I have by me; and they do not hitherto, thank God, support the author's complaint, unless a vast increase of the quantity of goods manufactured be a proof of losing the manufacture. On a view of the registers in the West Riding of Yorkshire, for three years before the war, and for the three last, it appears, that the quantities of cloths entered were as follows:

	Pieces broad.	Pieces narrow.
1752 . . .	60,724 . . .	72,442
1753 . . .	55,358 . . .	71,618
1754 . . .	56,070 . . .	72,394
	<hr/> 172,152	<hr/> 216,454

* In a course of years a few manufacturers have been tempted abroad, not by cheap living, but by immense

		Pieces broad.		Pieces narrow.
	1765 . .	54,660 . .		77,419
	1766 . .	72,575 . .		78,839
	1767 . .	102,428 . .		78,819
<hr/>				
3 years, ending	1767 . .	229,663 . .		235,131
3 years, ending	1754 . .	172,152 . .		216,454
<hr/>				
	Increase	57,511 . .		18,677

In this manner this capital branch of manufacture has increased, under the increase of taxes ; and this not from a declining, but from a greatly flourishing period of commerce. I may say the same on the best authority of the fabric of thin goods at Halifax ; of the bays at Rochdale ; and of that infinite variety of admirable manufactures that grow and extend every year among the spirited, inventive, and enterprising traders of Manchester.

A trade sometimes seems to perish when it only assumes a different form. Thus the coarsest woollens were formerly exported in great quantities to Russia. The Russians now supply themselves with these goods. But the export thither of finer cloths has increased in proportion as the other has declined. Possibly some parts of the kingdom may have felt something like a languor in business. Objects like trade and manufacture, which the very attempt to confine would certainly destroy, frequently change their place ; and thereby, far from being lost, are often highly improved. Thus some manufactures have decayed in the west and south, which have made new and more vigorous shoots when transplanted into the north. And here it is impossible to pass by, though

premiums, to set up as masters, and to introduce the manufacture. This must happen in every country eminent for the skill of its artificers, and has nothing to do with taxes and the price of provisions.

the author has said nothing upon it, the vast addition to the mass of British trade, which has been made by the improvement of Scotland. What does he think of the commerce of the city of Glasgow, and of the manufactures of Paisley and all the adjacent country? ; has this anything like the deadly aspect and *facies Hippocratica* which the false diagnostic of our state physician has given to our trade in general? Has he not heard of the iron-works of such magnitude even in their cradle which are set up on the Carron, and which at the same time have drawn nothing from Sheffield, Birmingham, or Wolverhampton?

This might perhaps be enough to show the entire falsity of the complaint concerning the decline of our manufactures. But every step we advance, this matter clears up more; and the false terrors of the author are dissipated, and fade away as the light appears. 'The trade and manufactures of this country (says he) going to ruin, and a diminution of our revenue from consumption must attend the loss of so many seamen and artificers.' Nothing more true than the general observation: nothing more false than its application to our circumstances. Let the revenue on consumption speak for itself:—

Average of net excise, since the new duties,	
three years ending 1767	£4,590,734
Ditto before the new duties, three years ending 1759	
	3,261,694
Average increase	
	£1,329,040

Here is no diminution. Here is, on the contrary, an immense increase. This is owing, I shall be told, to the new duties, which may increase the total bulk, but at the same time may make some diminution of the produce of the old. Were this the fact, it would

be far from supporting the author's complaint. It might have proved that the burden lay rather too heavy ; but it would never prove that the *revenue from consumption* was impaired, which it was his business to do. But what is the real fact ? Let us take, as the best instance for the purpose, the produce of the old hereditary and temporary excise granted in the reign of Charles the Second, whose object is that of most of the new impositions, from two averages, each of eight years.

Average, first period, eight years, ending 1754	£525,317
Ditto, second period, eight years, ending 1767	538,542
Increase	£13,225

I have taken these averages as including in each a war and a peace period ; the first before the imposition of the new duties, the other since those impositions ; and such is the state of the oldest branch of the revenue from consumption. Besides the acquisition of so much new, this article, to speak of no other, has rather increased under the pressure of all those additional taxes to which the author is pleased to attribute its destruction. But as the author has made his grand effort against those moderate, judicious, and necessary levies, which support all the dignity, the credit, and the power of his country, the reader will excuse a little further detail on this subject ; that we may see how little oppressive those taxes are on the shoulders of the public, with which he labours so earnestly to load its imagination. For this purpose we take the state of that specific article upon which the two capital burdens of the war leaned the most immediately, by the additional duties on malt, and upon beer.

	Barrels.
Average of strong beer, brewed in eight years before the additional malt and beer duties	3,895,059
Average of strong beer, eight years since the duties	4,060,726
Increase in the last period . . .	165,667

Here is the effect of two such daring taxes as *3d.* by the bushel additional on malt, and *3s.* by the barrel additional on beer. Two impositions laid without remission one upon the neck of the other ; and laid upon an object which before had been immensely loaded. They did not in the least impair the consumption : it has grown under them. It appears that, upon the whole, the people did not feel so much inconvenience from the new duties as to oblige them to take refuge in the private brewery. Quite the contrary happened in both these respects in the reign of King William ; and it happened from much slighter impositions *. No people can long consume a commodity for which they are not well able to pay. An enlightened reader laughs at the inconsistent chimera of our author, of a people universally luxurious, and at the same time oppressed with taxes and declining in trade. For my part, I cannot look on these duties as the author does. He sees nothing but the

* Although the public brewery has considerably increased in this latter period, the produce of the malt-tax has been something less than in the former ; this cannot be attributed to the new malt-tax. Had this been the cause of the lessened consumption, the public brewery, so much more burdened must have felt it more. The cause of this diminution of the malt-tax I take to have been principally owing to the greater dearness of corn in the second period than in the first, which, in all its consequences, affected the people in the country much more than those in the towns. But the revenue from consumption was not, on the whole, impaired ; as we have seen in the foregoing pages.

burden. I can perceive the burden as well as he ; but I cannot avoid contemplating also the strength that supports it. From thence I draw the most comfortable assurances of the future vigour, and the ample resources, of this great, misrepresented country : and can never prevail on myself to make complaints which have no cause, in order to raise hopes which have no foundation.

When a representation is built on truth and nature, one member supports the other, and mutual lights are given and received from every part. Thus, as our manufacturers have not deserted, nor the manufacture left us, nor the consumption declined, nor the revenue sunk ; so neither has trade, which is at once the result, measure, and cause of the whole, in the least decayed, as our author has thought proper sometimes to affirm, constantly to suppose, as if it were the most indisputable of all propositions. The reader will see below the comparative state of our trade * in three of the best years before our increase of debt and taxes, and with it the three last years since the author's date of our ruin.

In the last three years the whole of our exports was between 44 and 45 millions. In the three years preceding the war, it was no more than from 35 to 36 millions. The average balance of the former period

* Total Imports, value				Exports, ditto.	
1752	.	.	£7,889,369	.	£11,694,912
1753	.	.	8,625,029	.	12,243,604
1754	.	.	8,093,472	.	11,787,828
Total				£24,607,870	35,726,344
					24,607,870
				Exports exceed imports	11,118,474
				Medium balance . . .	£3,706,158

was £3,706,000 ; of the latter, something above four millions. It is true, that whilst the impressions of the author's destructive war continued, our trade was greater than it is at present. One of the necessary consequences of the peace was, that France must gradually recover a part of those markets of which she had been originally in possession. However, after all these deductions, still the gross trade in the worst year of the present is better than in the best year of any former period of peace. A very great part of our taxes, if not the greatest, has been imposed since the beginning of the century. On the author's principles, this continual increase of taxes must have ruined our trade, or at least entirely checked its growth. But I have a manuscript of Davenant, which contains an abstract of our trade for the years 1703 and 1704 ; by which it appears that the whole export from England did not then exceed £6,552,019. It is now considerably more than double that amount. Yet England was then a rich and flourishing nation.

The author endeavours to derogate from the balance in our favour as it stands on the entries, and reduces it from four millions, as it there appears, to on more than £2,500,000. His observation on the looseness and inaccuracy of the export entries is

Total Imports, value,		Exports, ditto,	
1764	£10,319,946		£16,164,532
1765	10,889,742		14,550,507
1766	11,475,825		14,024,964
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total	£32,685,513		44,740,003
			<hr/>
			32,685,513
			<hr/>
Exports exceed			12,054,490
			<hr/>
Medium balance for three last years			£4,018,163

just ; and that the error is always an error of excess, I readily admit. But because, as usual, he has wholly omitted some very material facts, his conclusion is as erroneous as the entries he complains of.

On this point of the custom-house entries I shall make a few observations. (i.) The inaccuracy of these entries can extend only to FREE GOODS, that is, to such British products and manufactures, as are exported without drawback and without bounty ; which do not in general amount to more than two-thirds at the very utmost of the whole export even of *our home products*. The valuable articles of corn, malt, leather, hops, beer, and many others, do not come under this objection of inaccuracy. The article of CERTIFICATE GOODS re-exported, a vast branch of our commerce, admits of no error (except some smaller frauds which cannot be estimated), as they have all a drawback of duty, and the exporter must therefore correctly specify their quantity and kind. The author therefore is not warranted from the known error in some of the entries, to make a general defalcation from the whole balance in our favour. This error cannot affect more than half, if so much, of the export article. (ii.) In the account made up at the Inspector-General's office, they estimate only the original cost of British products as they are here purchased ; and on foreign goods, only the prices in the country from whence they are sent. This was the method established by Mr Davenant ; and as far as it goes, it certainly is a good one. But the profits of the merchant at home, and of our factories abroad, are not taken into the account ; which profit on such an immense quantity of goods exported and re-exported cannot fail of being very great : five per cent., upon the whole, I should think, a very moderate allowance. (iii.) It does not comprehend

the advantage arising from the employment of 600,000 tons of shipping, which must be paid by the foreign consumer, and which, in many bulky articles of commerce, is equal to the value of the commodity. This can scarcely be rated at less than a million annually. (iv.) The whole import from Ireland and America, and from the west Indies, is set against us in the ordinary way of striking a balance of imports and exports ; whereas the import and export are both our own. This is just as ridiculous, as to put against the general balance of the nation, how much more goods Cheshire receives from London than London from Cheshire. The whole revolves and circulates through this kingdom, and is, so far as regards our profit, in the nature of home trade, as much as if the several countries of America and Ireland were all pieced to Cornwall. The course of exchange with all these places is fully sufficient to demonstrate that this kingdom has the whole advantage of their commerce. When the final profit upon a whole system of trade rests and centres in a certain place, a balance struck in that place merely on the mutual sale of commodities is quite fallacious. (v.) The custom-house entries furnish a most defective, and indeed, ridiculous idea of the most valuable branch of trade we have in the world, that with Newfoundland. Observe what you export thither ; a little spirits, provision, fishing-lines, and fishing-hooks. Is this *export* the true idea of the Newfoundland trade in the light of a beneficial branch of commerce ? Nothing less. Examine our imports from thence ; it seems upon this vulgar idea of exports and imports, to turn the balance against you. But your exports to Newfoundland are your own goods. Your import is your own food ; as much your own, as that you raise with your ploughs out of your own soil ; and

not your loss, but your gain ; your riches, not your poverty. But so fallacious is this way of judging, that neither the export nor import, nor both together, supply any idea approaching to adequate of that branch of business. The vessels in that trade go straight from Newfoundland to the foreign market ; and the sale there, not the import here, is the measure of its value. That trade, which is one of your greatest and best, is hardly so much as seen in the custom-house entries ; and it is not of less annual value to this nation than £400,000. (vi.) The quality of your imports must be considered as well as the quantity. To state the whole of the foreign import *as loss*, is exceedingly absurd. All the iron, hemp, flax, cotton, Spanish wool, raw silk, woollen and linen-yarn which we import, are by no means to be considered as the matter of a merely luxurious consumption ; which is the idea too generally and loosely annexed to our import article. These above mentioned are materials of industry, not of luxury, which are wrought up here, in many instances, to ten times, and more, of their original value. Even where they are not subservient to our exports, they still add to our internal wealth, which consists in the stock of useful commodities, as much as in gold and silver. In looking over the specific articles of our export and import, I have often been astonished to see for how small a part of the supply of our consumption either luxurious or convenient, we are indebted to nations properly foreign to us.

These considerations are entirely passed over by the author ; they have been but too much neglected by most who have speculated on this subject. But they ought never to be omitted by those who mean to come to anything like the true state of the British trade. They compensate, and they more than com-

pensate, everything which the author can cut off with any appearance of reason for the over-entry of British goods ; and they restore to us that balance of four millions, which the author has thought proper on such a very poor and limited comprehension of the object to reduce to £2,500,000.

In general this author is so circumstanced, that to support his theory he is obliged to assume his facts : and then, if you allow his facts, they will not support his conclusions. What if all he says of the state of this balance were true ? ; did not the same objections always lie to custom-house entries ? ; do they defalcate more from the entries of 1766 than from those of 1754 ? If they prove us ruined, we were always ruined. Some ravens have always indeed croaked out this kind of song. They have a malignant delight in presaging mischief, when they are not employed in doing it ; they are miserable and disappointed at every instance of the public prosperity. They overlook us like the malevolent being of the poet.

*Tritonida conspicit arcem
Ingeniis, opibusque, et festa paco virentem ;
Vixque tenet lacrymas quia nil lacrymabile cernit.*

It is in this spirit that some have looked upon those accidents that cast an occasional damp upon trade. Their imaginations entail these accidents upon us in perpetuity. We have had some bad harvests. This must very disadvantageously affect the balance of trade, and the navigation of a people, so large a part of whose commerce is in grain. But, in knowing the cause, we are morally certain, that, according to the course of events, it cannot long subsist. In the three last years, we have exported scarcely any grain ; in good years, that export hath been worth twelve hundred thousand pounds and

more ; in the two last years, far from exporting, we have been obliged to import to the amount perhaps of our former exportation. So that in this article the balance must be £2,000,000 against us ; that is, one million in the ceasing of gain, the other in the increase of expenditure. But none of the author's promises or projects could have prevented this misfortune ; and, thank God, we do not want him or them to relieve us from it ; although, if his friends should now come into power, I doubt not but they will be ready to take credit for any increase of trade or excise, that may arise from the happy circumstance of a good harvest.

This connects with his loud laments and melancholy prognostications concerning the high price of the necessaries of life and the products of labour. With all his others, I deny this fact ; and I again call upon him to prove it. Take average and not accident, the grand and first necessary of life is cheap in this country ; and that too as weighed, not against labour, which is its true counterpoise, but against money. Does he call the price of wheat at this day, between 32 and 40 shillings per quarter in London dear * ? He must know that fuel (an object of the highest order in the necessaries of life, and of the first necessity in almost every kind of manufacture) is in many of our provinces cheaper than in any part of the globe. Meat is on the whole not excessively dear, whatever its price may be at particular times and from particular accidents. If it has had anything like an uniform rise, this enhancement may easily be proved not to be owing to the increase of taxes, but to uniform increase of consumption and

* It is dearer in some places, and rather cheaper in others ; but it must soon all come to a level.

of money. Diminish the latter, and meat in your markets will be sufficiently cheap in account, but much dearer in effect : because fewer will be in a condition to buy. Thus your apparent plenty will be real indigence. At present, even under temporary disadvantages, the use of flesh is greater here than anywhere else ; it is continued without any interruption of Lents or meagre days ; it is sustained and growing even with the increase of our taxes. But some have the art of converting even the signs of national prosperity into symptoms of decay and ruin. And our author, who so loudly disclaims popularity, never fails to lay hold of the most vulgar popular prejudices and humours, in hopes to captivate the crowd. Even those peevish dispositions which grow out of some transitory suffering, those passing clouds which float in our changeable atmosphere, are by him industriously figured into frightful shapes, in order first to terrify, and then to govern the populace.

It was not enough for the author's purpose to give this false and discouraging picture of the state of his own country. It did not fully answer his end, to exaggerate her burdens, to depreciate her successes, and to vilify her character. Nothing had been done, unless the situation of France were exalted in proportion as that of England had been abased. The reader will excuse the citation I make at length from his book ; he outdoes himself upon this occasion. His confidence is indeed unparalleled, and altogether of the heroic cast.

If our rival nations were in the same circumstances with ourselves, the *augmentation of our taxes would produce no ill consequences* : if we were obliged to raise our prices, they must, from the same causes, do the like, and could take no

advantage by underselling and under-working us. But the alarming consideration to Great Britain is, *that France is not in the same condition.* Her distresses, during the war, were great, but they were immediate; her want of credit, as has been said, compelled her to impoverish her people, by raising the greatest part of her supplies within the year; *but the burdens she imposed on them were, in a great measure, temporary, and must be greatly diminished by a few years of peace.* She could procure no considerable loans, therefore she has mortgaged no *such oppressive taxes as those Great Britain has imposed in perpetuity for payment of interest.* Peace must, therefore, soon re-establish her commerce and manufactures, especially as the comparative *lightness of taxes*, and the cheapness of living, in that country, must make France an asylum for British manufacturers and artificers.

On this the author rests the merit of his whole system. And on this point I will join issue with him. If France is not at least in the *same condition*, even in that very condition which the author falsely represents to be ours,—if the very reverse of his proposition be not true, then I will admit his state of the nation to be just; and all his inferences from that state to be logical and conclusive. It is not surprising, that the author should hazard our opinion of his veracity. That is a virtue on which great statesmen do not perhaps pique themselves so much; but it is somewhat extraordinary, that he should stake on a very poor calculation of chances, all credit for care, for accuracy, and for knowledge of the subject of which he treats. He is rash and inaccurate, because he thinks he writes to a public ignorant and

inattentive. But he may find himself in that respect, as in many others, greatly mistaken.

In order to contrast the light and vigorous condition of France with that of England, weak, and sinking under her burdens, he states, in his tenth page, that France had raised £50,314,378 sterling *by taxes within the several years* from the year 1756 to 1762 both inclusive. An Englishman must stand aghast at such a representation: To find France able to *raise within the year* sums little inferior to all that we were able even to *borrow* on interest with all the resources of the greatest and most established credit in the world! Europe was filled with astonishment when they saw England *borrow* in one year twelve millions. It was thought, and very justly, no small proof of national strength and financial skill, to find a fund for the payment of the interest upon this sum. The interest of this, computed with the one per cent. annuities, amounted only to £600,000 a year. This, I say, was thought a surprising effort even of credit. But this author talks, as of a thing not worth proving, and but just worth observing, that France in one year raised sixteen times that sum without borrowing, and continued to raise sums not far from equal to it for several years together. Suppose some Jacob Henriques had proposed, in the year 1762, to prevent a perpetual charge on the nation by raising ten millions within the year: he would have been considered, not as a harsh financier, who laid a heavy hand on the public; but as a poor visionary, who had run mad on supplies and taxes. They who know that the whole land-tax of England, at 4s. in the pound, raises but two millions, will not easily apprehend that any such sums as the author has conjured up can be raised even in the most opulent nations. France owed a large debt, and was encumbered with

heavy establishments, before that war. The author does not formally deny that she borrowed something in every year of its continuance ; let him produce the funds for this astonishing annual addition to all her vast preceding taxes ; an addition equal to the whole excise, customs, land and malt-taxes of England taken together.

But what must be the reader's astonishment, perhaps his indignation, if he should find that this great financier has fallen into the most unaccountable of all errors, no less an error than that of mistaking the *identical sums borrowed by France upon interest for supplies raised within the year !* Can it be conceived that any man, only entered into the first rudiments of finance, should make so egregious a blunder ; should write it, should print it ; should carry it to a second edition ; should take it not collaterally and incidentally, but lay it down as the corner-stone of his whole system, in such an important point as the comparative states of France and England ? But it will be said, that it was his misfortune to be ill-informed. Not at all. A man of any loose general knowledge, and of the most ordinary sagacity, never could have been misinformed in so gross a manner ; because he would have immediately rejected so wild and extravagant an account.

The fact is this : the credit of France, bad as it might have been, did enable her (not to raise within the year) but to *borrow* the very sums the author mentions ; that is to say, 1,106,916,261 livres, making, in the author's computation, £50,314,378. The credit of France was low ; but it was not annihilated. She did not derive, as our author chooses to assert, any advantages from the debility of her credit. Its consequence was the natural one : she borrowed ; but she borrowed upon bad terms, indeed on the most exorbitant usury.

In speaking of a foreign revenue, the very pretence to accuracy would be the most inaccurate thing in the world. Neither the author nor I can with certainty authenticate the information we communicate to the public, nor in an affair of eternal fluctuation arrive at perfect exactness. All we can do, and this we may be expected to do, is to avoid gross errors and blunders of a capital nature. We cannot order the proper officer to lay the accounts before the House. But the reader must judge on the probability of the accounts we lay before him. The author speaks of France as raising her supplies for war by taxes within the year; and of her debt, as a thing scarcely worthy of notice. I affirm that she borrowed large sums in every year; and has thereby accumulated an immense debt. This debt continued after the war infinitely to embarrass her affairs; and to find some means for its reduction was then and has ever since been the first object of her policy. But she has so little succeeded in all her efforts, that the *perpetual* debt of France is at this hour little short of £100,000,000 sterling; and she stands charged with at least 40,000,000 of English pounds on life-rents and tontines. The annuities paid at this day at the Hôtel de Ville of Paris, which are by no means her sole payments of that nature, amount to 139,000,000 of livres, that is, to £6,318,000; besides *billets au porteur*, and various detached and unfunded debts, to a great amount, and which bear an interest.

At the end of the war, the interest payable on her debt amounted to upwards of seven millions sterling. M. de la Verdy, the last hope of the French finances, was called in, to aid in the reduction of an interest, so light to our author, so intolerably heavy upon those who are to pay it. After many unsuccessful efforts towards reconciling arbitrary reduction with

public credit, he was obliged to go the plain high road of power, and to impose a tax of 10 per cent. upon a very great part of the capital debt of that kingdom ; and this measure of present ease, to the destruction of future credit, produced about £500,000 a year, which was carried to their *Caisse d'amortissement* or sinking fund. But so unfaithfully and unsteadily has this and all the other articles which compose that fund been applied to their purposes, that they have given the state but very little even of present relief, since it is known to the whole world that she is behind-hand on every one of her establishments. Since the year 1763, there has been no operation of any consequence on the French finances ; and in this enviable condition is France at present with regard to her debt.

Everybody knows that the principal of the debt is but a name ; the interest is the only thing which can distress a nation. Take this idea, which will not be disputed, and compare the interest paid by England with that paid by France :

Interest paid by France, funded and unfunded, for perpetuity or on lives, after the tax of 10 per cent.	£6,500,000
Interest paid by England, as stated by the author, p. 27	4,600,000
<hr/>	
Interest paid by France exceeds that paid by England	£1,900,000

The author cannot complain that I state the interest paid by England as too low. He takes it himself as the extremest term. Nobody who knows anything of the French finances will affirm that I state the interest paid by that kingdom too high. It might be easily proved to amount to a great deal more : even this is near two millions above what is paid by England.

There are three standards to judge of the good condition of a nation with regard to its finances. (i.) The relief of the people. (ii.) The equality of supplies to establishments. (iii.) The state of public credit. Try France on all these standards.

Although our author very liberally administers relief to the people of France, its government has not been altogether so gracious. Since the peace, she has taken off but a single *vingtième*, or shilling in the pound, and some small matter in the capitation. But, if the government has relieved them in one point, it has only burdened them the more heavily in another. The *Taille* *, that grievous and destructive imposition, which all their financiers lament, without being able to remove or to replace, has been augmented no less than six millions of livres, or 270,000 pounds English. A further augmentation of this or other duties is now talked of ; and it is certainly necessary to their affairs ; so exceedingly remote from either truth or verisimilitude is the author's amazing assertion, *that the burdens of France in the war were in a great measure temporary, and must be greatly diminished by a few years of peace.*

In the next place, if the people of France are not lightened of taxes, so neither is the state disburdened of charges. I speak from very good information, that the annual income of that state is at this day thirty millions of livres, or £1,350,000 sterling, short of a provision for their ordinary peace establishment ; so far are they from the attempt or even hope to discharge any part of the capital of their enormous debt. Indeed, under such extreme straitness and distraction labours the whole body of their finances, so far

* A tax rated by the intendant in each generality, on the presumed fortune of every person below the degree of a gentleman.

does their charge outrun their supply in every particular, that no man, I believe, who has considered their affairs with any degree of attention or information, but must hourly look for some extraordinary convulsion in that whole system : the effect of which on France, and even on all Europe, it is difficult to conjecture.

In the third point of view, their credit. Let the reader cast his eye on a table of the price of French funds, as they stood a few weeks ago, compared with the state of some of our English stocks, even in their present low condition :—

French.		British.	
5 per cents . . .	63	Bank stock, $5\frac{1}{2}$. .	159
4 per cent (not taxed)	57	4 per cent cons. . .	100
3 per cent . . .	49	3 per cent cons. . .	88

This state of the funds of France and England is sufficient to convince even prejudice and obstinacy, that if France and England are not in the same condition (as the author affirms they are not) the difference is infinitely to the disadvantage of France. This depreciation of their funds has not much the air of a nation lightening burdens and discharging debts.

Such is the true comparative state of the two kingdoms in those capital points of view. Now as to the nature of the taxes which provide for this debt, as well as for their ordinary establishments, the author has thought proper to affirm that ‘they are comparatively light’; that ‘she has mortgaged no such oppressive taxes as ours’; his effrontery on this head is intolerable. Does the author recollect a single tax in England to which something parallel in nature, and as heavy in burden, does not exist in France; does he not know that the lands of the noblesse are still under the load of the greater part of the old feudal charges, from which the gentry of England have been

relieved for upwards of a hundred years, and which were in kind, as well as burden, much worse than our modern land-tax ? Besides that all the gentry of France serve in the army on very slender pay, and to the utter ruin of their fortunes, all those who are not noble have their lands heavily taxed. Does he not know that wine, brandy, soap, candles, leather, saltpetre, gunpowder, are taxed in France ? Has he not heard that government in France has made a monopoly of that great article of *salt* ? , that they compel the people to take a certain quantity of it, and at a certain rate, both rate and quantity fixed at the arbitrary pleasure of the imposer ? *, that they pay in France the *Taille*, an arbitrary imposition on presumed property ? , that a tax is laid in fact and name, on the same arbitrary standard, upon the acquisitions of their *industry* ? , and that in France a heavy *capitation-tax* is also paid, from the highest to the very poorest sort of people ? Have we taxes of such weight, or anything at all of the compulsion, in the article of *salt* ? , do we pay any *tailage*, any *faculty-tax*, any *industry-tax* ? , do we pay any *capitation-tax* whatsoever ? I believe the people of London would fall into an agony to hear of such taxes proposed upon them as are paid at Paris. There is not a single article of provision for man or beast which enters that great city, and is not excised ; corn, hay, meal, butcher's meat, fish, fowls, everything. I do not here mean to censure the policy of taxes laid on the consumption of great luxurious cities. I only state the fact. We should be with difficulty brought to

* Before the war it was sold to, or rather forced on the consumer at 11 sous, or about 5d. the pound. What it is at present, I am not informed. Even this will appear no trivial imposition. In London, salt may be had at a penny farthing per pound from the last retailer.

hear of a tax of 50s. upon every ox sold in Smithfield. Yet this tax is paid in Paris. Wine, the lower sort of wine, little better than English small beer, pays 2*d.* a bottle.

We, indeed, tax our beer ; but the imposition on small beer is very far from heavy. In no part of England are eatables of any kind the object of taxation. In almost every other country in Europe they are excised, more or less. I have by me the state of the revenues of many of the principal nations on the Continent ; and, on comparing them with ours, I think I am fairly warranted to assert, that England is the most lightly taxed of any of the great states of Europe. They, whose unnatural and sullen joy arises from a contemplation of the distresses of their country, will revolt at this position. But if I am called upon, I will prove it beyond all possibility of dispute ; even though this proof should deprive these gentlemen of the singular satisfaction of considering their country as undone ; and though the best civil government, the best constituted, and the best managed revenue that ever the world beheld, should be thoroughly vindicated from their perpetual clamours and complaints. As to our neighbour and rival France, in addition to what I have here suggested, I say, and when the author chooses formally to deny, I shall formally prove it, that her subjects pay more than England, on a computation of the wealth of both countries ; that her taxes are more injudiciously and more oppressively imposed ; more vexatiously collected ; come in a smaller proportion to the royal coffers, and are less applied by far to the public service. I am not one of those who choose to take the author's word for this happy and flourishing condition of the French finances, rather than attend to the changes, the violent pushes and the despair of all her own fi-

nanciers. Does he choose to be referred for the easy and happy condition of the subject in France to the remonstrances of their own parliaments, written with such an eloquence, feeling, and energy, as I have not seen exceeded in any other writings? The author may say, their complaints are exaggerated, and the effects of faction. I answer, that they are the representations of numerous, grave, and most respectable bodies of men, upon the affairs of their own country. But, allowing that discontent and faction may pervert the judgment of such venerable bodies in France, we have as good a right to suppose that the same causes may full as probably have produced from a private, however respectable person, that frightful, and, I trust I have shown, groundless representation of our own affairs in England.

The author is so conscious of the dangerous effects of that representation, that he thinks it necessary, and very necessary it is, to guard against them. He assures us, 'that he has not made that display of the difficulties of his country, to expose her counsels to the ridicule of other states, or to provoke a vanquished enemy to insult her; nor to excite the people's rage against their governors, or sink them into a despondency of the public welfare.' I readily admit this apology for his intentions. God forbid I should think any man capable of entertaining so execrable and senseless a design. The true cause of his drawing so shocking a picture is no more than this; and it ought rather to claim our pity than excite our indignation; he finds himself out of power; and this condition is intolerable to him. The same sun which gilds all nature, and exhilarates the whole creation, does not shine upon disappointed ambition. It is something that rays out of darkness, and inspires nothing but gloom and melancholy. Men

in this deplorable state of mind find a comfort in spreading the contagion of their spleen. They find an advantage too ; for it is a general, popular error, to imagine the loudest complainers for the public to be the most anxious for its welfare. If such persons can answer the ends of relief and profit to themselves, they are apt to be careless enough about either the means or the consequences.

Whatever this complainant's motives may be, the effects can by no possibility be other than those which he so strongly, and I hope truly, disclaims all intention of producing. To verify this, the reader has only to consider how dreadful a picture he has drawn of the state of this kingdom ; such a picture as, I believe, has hardly been applicable, without some exaggeration, to the most degenerate and undone commonwealth that ever existed. Let this view of things be compared with the prospect of a remedy which he proposes in the page directly opposite, and the subsequent. I believe no man living could have imagined it possible, except for the sake of burlesquing a subject, to propose remedies so ridiculously disproportionate to the evil, so full of uncertainty in their operation, and depending for their success in every step upon the happy event of so many new, dangerous, and visionary projects. It is not amiss, that he has thought proper to give the public some little notice of what they may expect from his friends, when our affairs shall be committed to their management. Let us see how the accounts of disease and remedy are balanced in his *State of the Nation*. In the first place, on the side of evils, he states, 'an impoverished and heavily-burdened public. A declining trade and decreasing specie. The power of the Crown never so much extended over the great ; but the great without influence over

the lower sort. Parliament losing its reverence with the people. The voice of the multitude set up against the sense of the legislature ; a people luxurious and licentious, impatient of rule, and despising all authority. Government relaxed in every sinew, and a corrupt selfish spirit pervading the whole. An opinion of many, that the form of government is not worth contending for. No attachment in the bulk of the people towards the constitution. No reverence for the customs of our ancestors. No attachment but to private interest, nor any zeal but for selfish gratifications. Trade and manufactures going to ruin. Great Britain in danger of becoming tributary to France, and the descent of the crown dependent on her pleasure. Ireland, in case of a war, to become a prey to France ; and Great Britain, unable to recover Ireland, cede it by treaty' (the author never can think of a treaty without making cessions), 'in order to purchase peace for herself. The colonies left exposed to the ravages of a domestic, or the conquest of a foreign enemy.'—Gloomy enough, God knows. The author well observes, *that a mind not totally devoid of feeling cannot look upon such a prospect without horror ; and an heart capable of humanity must be unable to bear its description.* He ought to have added, that no man of common discretion ought to have exhibited it to the public, if it were true ; or of common honesty, if it were false.

But now for the comfort ; the day-star which is to arise in our hearts ; the author's grand scheme for totally reversing this dismal state of things, and making us 'happy at home and respected abroad, formidable in war and flourishing in peace.'

In this great work he proceeds with a facility equally astonishing and pleasing. Never was finan-

cier less embarrassed by the burden of establishments, or with the difficulty of finding ways and means. If an establishment is troublesome to him, he lops off at a stroke just as much of it as he chooses. He mows down, without giving quarter, or assigning reason, army, navy, ordnance, ordinary, extraordinary; nothing can stand before him. Then, when he comes to provide, Amalthea's horn is in his hands; and he pours out with an inexhaustible bounty, taxes, duties, loans, and revenues, without uneasiness to himself, or burden to the public. In-somuch that, when we consider the abundance of his resources, we cannot avoid being surprised at his extraordinary attention to savings. But it is all the exuberance of his goodness.

This book has so much of a certain tone of power, that one would be almost tempted to think it written by some person who had been high in office. A man is generally rendered somewhat a worse reasoner for having been a minister. In private, the assent of listening and obsequious friends; in public, the venal cry and prepared vote of a passive senate, confirm him in habits of begging the question with impunity, and asserting without thinking himself obliged to prove. Had it not been for some such habits, the author could never have expected that we should take his estimate for a peace establishment solely on his word.

This estimate which he gives is the great groundwork of his plan for the national redemption; and it ought to be well and firmly laid, or what must become of the superstructure? One would have thought the natural method in a plan of reformation would be, to take the present existing estimates as they stand; and then to show what may be practicably and safely defalcated from them. This would,

I say, be the natural course ; and what would be expected from a man of business. But this author takes a very different method. For the ground of his speculation of a present peace establishment, he resorts to a former speculation of the same kind, which was in the mind of the minister of the year 1764. Indeed it never existed anywhere else. ' The plan ', says he, with his usual ease, ' has been already formed, and the outline drawn, by the administration of 1764. I shall attempt to fill up the void and obliterated parts, and trace its operation. The standing expense of the present (his projected) peace establishment, *improved by the experience of the two last years, may be thus estimated* ' ; and he estimates it at £3,468,161.

Here too it would be natural to expect some reasons for condemning the subsequent actual establishments, which have so much transgressed the limits of his plan of 1764, as well as some arguments in favour of his new project ; which has in some articles exceeded, in others fallen short, but on the whole is much below his old one. Hardly a word on any of these points, the only points however that are in the least essential ; for unless you assign reasons for the increase or diminution of the several articles of public charge, the playing at establishments and estimates is an amusement of no higher order, and of much less ingenuity, than *Questions and commands*, or *What is my thought like ?* To bring more distinctly under the reader's view this author's strange method of proceeding, I will lay before him the three schemes ; viz. the idea of the ministers in 1764, the actual estimates of the two last years as given by the author himself, and lastly the new project of his political millennium.

Plan of establishment for 1764, as by <i>Con-</i> <i>siderations</i> , p. 43	1 £3,609,700
Medium of 1767 and 1768, as by <i>State of the</i> <i>Nation</i> , pp. 29 and 30	3,919,375
Present peace establishment, as by the pro- ject in <i>State of the Nation</i> , p. 33	3,468,161

It is not from anything our author has anywhere said, that you are enabled to find the ground, much less the justification, of the immense difference between these several systems; you must compare them yourself, article by article; no very pleasing employment, by the way, to compare the agreement or disagreement of two chimeras. I now only speak of the comparison of his own two projects. As to the latter of them, it differs from the former, by having some of the articles diminished, and others increased. I find the chief article of reduction arises from the smaller deficiency of land and malt, and of the annuity funds, which he brings down to £295,561 in his new estimate, from £502,400 which he had allowed for those articles in the *Considerations*. With this *reduction*, owing, as it must be, merely to a smaller deficiency of funds, he has nothing at all to do. It can be no work and no merit of his. *But* with regard to the *increase*, the matter is very different. It is all his own; the public is loaded (for anything we can see to the contrary) entirely *gratis*. The chief articles of the increase are on the navy, and on the army and ordnance extraordinaries; the navy being estimated in his *State of the Nation* £50,000 a year more, and the army and ordnance extraordinaries £40,000 more, than he had thought proper to allow for them in that estimate in his *Considerations* *, which he makes the foundation

* The figures in the *Considerations* are wrongly cast up; it should be £3,608,700.

of his present project. He has given no sort of reason, stated no sort of necessity, for this additional allowance, either in the one article or the other. What is still stronger, he admits that his allowance for the army and ordnance extras is too great, and expressly refers you to the *Considerations*; where, far from giving £75,000 a year to that service, as the *State of the Nation* has done, the author apprehends his own scanty provision of £35,000 to be by far too considerable, and thinks it may well admit of further reductions.

Thus, according to his own principles, this great economist falls into a vicious prodigality; and is as far in his estimate from a consistency with his own principles as with the real nature of the services.

Still, however, his present establishment differs from its archetype of 1764, by being, though raised in particular parts, upon the whole, about £141,000 smaller. It is improved, he tells us, by the experience of the two last years. One would have concluded that the peace establishment of these two years had been less than that of 1764, in order to suggest to the author his improvements, which enabled him to reduce it. But how does that turn out?

Peace establishment, 1767 and 1768, medium	£3,919,375
Ditto, estimate in the <i>Considerations</i> , for 1764	3,609,700

Difference . . .	£309,675
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A vast increase instead of diminution. The experience then of the two last years ought naturally to have given the idea of a heavier establishment; but this writer is able to diminish by increasing, and to draw the effects of subtraction from the operations of addition. By means of these new powers, he may certainly do whatever he pleases. He is indeed mod-

erate enough in the use of them, and condescends to settle his establishments at £3,468,161 a year.

However, he has not yet done with it; he has further ideas of saving, and new resources of revenue. These additional savings are principally two: (i.) *It is to be hoped*, says he, that the sum of £250,000 (which in the estimate he allows for the deficiency of land and malt) will be less by £37,924.

(ii.) That the sum of £20,000 allowed for the Foundling Hospital, and £1,800 for American Surveys, will soon cease to be necessary, as the services will be completed.

What follows, with regard to the resources, is very well worthy the reader's attention. 'Of this estimate', says he, 'upwards of £300,000 will be for the plantation service; and that sum, *I hope*, the people of Ireland and the colonies *might be induced* to take off Great Britain, and defray between them, in the proportion of £200,000 by the colonies, and £100,000 by Ireland.'

Such is the whole of this mighty scheme. Take his reduced estimate, and his further reductions, and his resources all together, and the result will be—he will *certainly* lower the provision made for the navy. He will cut off largely (God knows what or how) from the army and ordnance extraordinaries. He may be *expected* to cut off more. He *hopes* that the deficiencies on land and malt will be less than usual; and he *hopes* that America and Ireland might be *induced* to take off £300,000 of our annual charges.

If any of these Hopes, Might, Insinuations, Expectations, and Inducements, should fail him, there will be a formidable gaping breach in his whole project. If all of them should fail, he has left the nation without a glimmering of hope in this thick night of terrors which he has thought fit to spread

about us. If every one of them, which, attended with success, would signify anything to our revenue, can have no effect but to add to our distractions and dangers, we shall be if possible in a still worse condition from his projects of cure, than he represents us from our original disorders.

Before we examine into the consequences of these schemes, and the probability of these savings, let us suppose them all real and all safe, and then see what it is they amount to, and how he reasons on them.

Deficiency on land and malt, less by . . .	£37,000
Foundling Hospital	20,000
American Surveys	1,800
	<hr/>
	£58,800

This is the amount of the only articles of saving he specifies: and yet he chooses to assert, 'that we may venture on the credit of them to reduce the standing expenses of the estimate (from £3,468,161) to £3,300,000'; that is, for a saving of £58,000 he is not ashamed to take credit for a defalcation from his own ideal establishment in a sum of no less than £168,161! Suppose even that we were to take up the estimate of the *Considerations* (which is however abandoned in the *State of the Nation*), and reduce his £75,000 extraordinaries to the original £35,000, still all these savings joined together give us but £98,800; that is, near £70,000 short of the credit he calls for, and for which he has neither given any reason, nor furnished any data whatsoever for others to reason upon.

Such are his savings, as operating on his own project of a peace establishment. Let us now consider them as they affect the existing establishment and our actual services. He tells us, the sum allowed in his estimate for the navy is '£69,321 less

than the grant for that service in 1767 ; but in that grant £30,000 was included for the purchase of hemp, and a saving of about £25,000 was made in that year.' The author has got some secret in arithmetic. These two sums put together amount, in the ordinary way of computing, to £55,000, and not to £69,321. On what principle has he chosen to take credit for £14,321 more ? To what this strange inaccuracy is owing, I cannot possibly comprehend ; nor is it very material, where the logic is so bad, and the policy so erroneous, whether the arithmetic be just or otherwise. But in a scheme for making this nation 'happy at home and respected abroad, formidable in war and flourishing in peace', it is surely a little unfortunate for us, that he has picked out the *Navy*, as the very first object of his economical experiments. Of all the public services, that of the navy is the one in which tampering may be of the greatest danger, which can worst be supplied upon an emergency, and of which any failure draws after it the longest and heaviest train of consequences. I am far from saying, that this or any service ought not to be conducted with economy. But I will never suffer the sacred name of economy to be bestowed upon arbitrary defalcation of charge. The author tells us himself, 'that to suffer the navy to rot in harbour for want of repairs and marines, would be to invite destruction.' It would be so. When the author talks therefore of savings on the navy estimate, it is incumbent on him to let us know, not what sums he will cut off, but what branch of that service he deems superfluous. Instead of putting us off with unmeaning generalities, he ought to have stated what naval force, what naval works, and what naval stores, with the lowest estimated expense, are necessary to keep our marine in a condition com-

mensurate to its great ends. And this too not for the contracted and deceitful space of a single year, but for some reasonable term. Everybody knows that many charges cannot be in their nature regular or annual. In the year 1767 a stock of hemp, etc., was to be laid in ; that charge intermits, but it does not end. Other charges of other kinds take their place. Great works are now carrying on at Portsmouth, but not of greater magnitude than utility ; and they must be provided for. A year's estimate is therefore no just idea at all of a permanent peace establishment. Had the author opened this matter upon these plain principles, a judgment might have been formed, how far he had contrived to reconcile national defence with public economy. Till he has done it, those who had rather depend on any man's reason than the greatest man's authority, will not give him credit on this head, for the saving of a single shilling. As to those savings which are already made, or in course of being made, whether right or wrong, he has nothing at all to do with them ; they can be no part of his project, considered as a plan of reformation. I greatly fear that the error has not lately been on the side of profusion.

Another head is the saving on the army and ordnance extraordinaries, particularly in the American branch. What or how much reduction may be made, none of us, I believe, can with any fairness pretend to say ; very little, I am convinced. The state of America is extremely unsettled ; more troops have been sent thither ; new dispositions have been made ; and this augmentation of number, and change of disposition, has rarely, I believe, the effect of lessening the bill for extraordinaries, which, if not this year, yet in the next we must certainly feel. Care has not been wanting to introduce

economy into that part of the service. The author's great friend has made, I admit, some regulations: his immediate successors have made more and better. This part will be handled more ably and more minutely at another time: but no one can cut down this bill of extraordinaries at his pleasure. The author has given us nothing, but his word, for any certain or considerable reduction; and this we ought to be the more cautious in taking, as he has promised great savings in his *Considerations*, which he has not chosen to abide by in his *State of the Nation*.

On this head also of the American extraordinaries, he can take credit for nothing. As to his next, the lessening of the deficiency of the land and malt-tax, particularly of the malt-tax, any person the least conversant in that subject cannot avoid a smile. This deficiency arises from charge of collection, from anticipation, and from defective produce. What has the author said on the reduction of any head of this deficiency upon the land-tax? On these points he is absolutely silent. As to the deficiency on the malt-tax, which is chiefly owing to a defective produce, he has and can have nothing to propose. If this deficiency should be lessened by the increase of malting in any years more than in others (as it is a greatly fluctuating object), how much of this obligation shall we owe to this author's ministry?; will it not be the case under any administration?; must it not go to the general service of the year, in some way or other, let the finances be in whose hands they will? But why take credit for so extremely reduced a deficiency at all? I can tell him he has no rational ground for it in the produce of the year 1767; and I suspect will have full as little reason from the produce of the year 1768.

That produce may indeed become greater, and the deficiency of course will be less. It may too be far otherwise. A fair and judicious financier will not, as this writer has done, for the sake of making out a specious account, select a favourable year or two, at remote periods, and ground his calculations on those. In 1768 he will not take the deficiencies of 1753 and 1754 for his standard. Sober men have hitherto (and must continue this course, to preserve this character), taken indifferently the mediums of the years immediately preceding. But a person who has a scheme from which he promises much to the public ought to be still more cautious ; he should ground his speculation rather on the lowest mediums ; because all new schemes are known to be subject to some defect or failure not foreseen ; which, therefore, every prudent proposer will be ready to allow for, in order to lay his foundation as low and as solid as possible. Quite contrary is the practice of some politicians. They first propose savings, which they well know cannot be made, in order to get a reputation for economy. In due time they assume another, but a different method, by providing for the service which they had before cut off or straitened, and which they can then very easily prove to be necessary. In the same spirit they raise magnificent ideas of revenue on funds which they know to be insufficient. Afterwards, who can blame them, if they do not satisfy the public desires ? They are great artificers ; but they cannot work without materials.

These are some of the little arts of great statesmen. To such we leave them, and follow where the author leads us, to his next resource, the Foundling Hospital. Whatever particular virtue there is in the mode of this saving, there seems to be nothing at all

new, and indeed nothing wonderfully important in it. The sum annually voted for the support of the Foundling Hospital has been in a former Parliament limited to the establishment of the children then in the hospital. When they are apprenticed, this provision will cease. It will therefore fall in more or less at different times ; and will at length cease entirely. But, until it does, we cannot reckon upon it as the saving on the establishment of any given year : nor can any one conceive how the author comes to mention this, any more than some other articles, as a part of a *new* plan of economy which is to retrieve our affairs. This charge will indeed cease in its own time. But will no other succeed to it ? Has he ever known the public free from some contingent charge, either for the just support of royal dignity or for national magnificence, or for public charity or for public service ? ; does he choose to flatter his readers that no such will ever return ? ; or does he in good earnest declare, that let the reason, or necessity, be what they will, he is resolved not to provide for such services ?

Another resource of economy yet remains, for he gleans the field very closely,—£1,800 for the American surveys. Why, what signifies a dispute about trifles ? ; he shall have it. But while he is carrying it off, I shall just whisper in his ear, that neither the saving that is allowed, nor that which is doubted of, can at all belong to that future proposed administration, whose touch is to cure all our evils. Both the one and the other belong equally (as indeed all the rest do) to the present administration, to any administration ; because they are the gift of time, and not the bounty of the exchequer.

I have now done with all the minor, preparatory parts of the author's scheme, the several articles

of saving which he proposes. At length comes the capital operation, his new resources. Three hundred thousand pounds a year from America and Ireland. Alas ! alas ! if that too should fail us, what will become of this poor undone nation ? The author, in a tone of great humility, *hopes* they may be induced to pay it. Well, if that be all, we may hope so too : and for any light he is pleased to give us into the ground of this hope and the ways and means of this inducement, here is a speedy end both of the question and the revenue.

It is the constant custom of this author, in all his writings, to take it for granted, that he has given you a revenue, whenever he can point out to you where you may have money, if you can contrive how to get at it ; and this seems to be the masterpiece of his financial ability. I think, however, in his way of proceeding, he has behaved rather like a harsh stepdame, than a kind nursing-mother to his country. Why stop at £300,000 ? If his state of things be at all founded, America and Ireland are much better able to pay £600,000 than we are to satisfy ourselves with half that sum. However, let us forgive him this one instance of tenderness towards Ireland and the colonies.

He spends a vast deal of time in an endeavour to prove that Ireland is able to bear greater impositions. He is of opinion, that the poverty of the lower class of people there is, in a great measure, owing to a *want* of judicious taxes ; that a land-tax will enrich her tenants ; that taxes are paid in England which are not paid there ; that the colony trade is increased above £100,000 since the peace ; that she *ought* to have further indulgence in that trade ; and ought to have further privileges in the woollen manufacture. From these premises, of what she

has, what she has not, and what she ought to have, he infers that Ireland will contribute £100,000 towards the extraordinaries of the American establishment.

I shall make no objections whatsoever, logical or financial, to this reasoning : many occur ; but they would lead me from my purpose, from which I do not intend to be diverted, because it seems to me of no small importance. It will be just enough to hint what I dare say many readers have before observed, that when any man proposes new taxes in a country with which he is not personally conversant by residence or office, he ought to lay open its situation much more minutely and critically than this author has done, or than perhaps he is able to do. He ought not to content himself with saying that a single article of her trade is increased £100,000 a year ; he ought, if he argues from the increase of trade to the increase of taxes, to state the whole trade, and not one branch of trade only ; he ought to enter fully into the state of its remittances, and the course of its exchange ; he ought likewise to examine whether all its establishments are increased or diminished ; and whether it incurs or discharges debts annually. But I pass over all this ; and am content to ask a few plain questions.

Does the author then seriously mean to propose in Parliament a land-tax or any tax for £100,000 a year upon Ireland ? If he does, and if fatally, by his temerity and our weakness, he should succeed ; then I say he will throw the whole empire from one end of it to the other into mortal convulsions. What is it that can satisfy the furious and perturbed mind of this man ? : is it not enough for him that such projects have alienated our colonies from the mother-

country, and not to propose violently to tear our sister-kingdom also from our side, and to convince every dependent part of the empire, that, when a little money is to be raised, we have no sort of regard to their ancient customs, their opinions, their circumstances, or their affections? He has however a *douceur* for Ireland in his pocket; benefits in trade, by opening the woollen manufacture to that nation. A very right idea in my opinion; but not more strong in reason, than likely to be opposed by the most powerful and most violent of all local prejudices and popular passions. First, a fire is already kindled by his schemes of taxation in America; he then proposes one which will set all Ireland in a blaze; and his way of quenching both is by a plan which may kindle perhaps ten times a greater flame in Britain.

Will the author pledge himself, previously to his proposal of such a tax, to carry this enlargement of the Irish trade? If he does not, then the tax will be certain; the benefit will be less than problematical. In this view, his compensation to Ireland vanishes into smoke; the tax, to their prejudices, will appear stark naked in the light of an act of arbitrary power and oppression. But, if he should propose the benefit and tax together, then the people of Ireland, a very high and spirited people, would think it the worst bargain in the world. They would look upon the one as wholly vitiated and poisoned by the other; and, if they could not be separated, would infallibly resist them both together. Here would be taxes, indeed, amounting to a handsome sum; £100,000 very effectually voted and passed through the best and most authentic forms; but how to be collected?—This is his perpetual manner. One of his projects depends for success upon another pro-

ject, and this upon a third, all of them equally visionary. His finance is like the Indian philosophy ; his earth is poised on the horns of a bull, his bull stands upon an elephant, his elephant is supported by a tortoise ; and so on forever.

As to his American £200,000 a year, he is satisfied to repeat gravely, as he has done an hundred times before, that the Americans are able to pay it. Well, and what then ? : does he lay open any part of his plan how they may be compelled to pay it, without plunging ourselves into calamities that outweigh tenfold the proposed benefit ? ; or does he show how they may be induced to submit to it quietly ? ; or does he give any satisfaction concerning the mode of levying it ; in commercial colonies, one of the most important and difficult of all considerations ? Nothing like it. To the Stamp Act, whatever its excellences may be, I think he will not in reality recur, or even choose to assert that he means to do so, in case his minister should come again into power. If he does, I will predict that some of the fastest friends of that minister will desert him upon this point. As to port duties he has damned them all in the lump, by declaring them ' contrary to the first principles of colonization, and not less prejudicial to the interests of Great Britain than to those of the colonies. Surely this single observation of his ought to have taught him a little caution ; he ought to have begun to doubt, whether there is not something in the nature of commercial colonies, which renders them an unfit object of taxation ; when port duties, so large a fund of revenue in all countries, are by himself found, in this case, not only improper, but destructive. However, he has here pretty well narrowed the field of taxation. Stamp Act, hardly to be resumed. Port duties, mischievous. Excises, I believe, he

will scarcely think worth the collection (if any revenue should be so) in America. Land tax (notwithstanding his opinion of its immense use to agriculture) he will not directly propose, before he has thought again and again on the subject. Indeed he very readily recommends it for Ireland, and seems to think it not improper for America; because, he observes, they already raise most of their taxes internally, including this tax. A most curious reason, truly! because their lands are already heavily burdened, he thinks it right to burden them still further. But he will recollect, for surely he cannot be ignorant of it, that the lands of America are not, as in England, let at a rent certain in money, and therefore cannot, as here, be taxed at a certain pound rate. They value them in gross among themselves; and none but themselves in their several districts can value them. Without their hearty concurrence and co-operation, it is evident, we cannot advance a step in the assessing or collecting any land-tax. As to the taxes which in some places the Americans pay by the acre, they are merely duties of regulation; they are small; and to increase them, notwithstanding the secret virtues of a land-tax, would be the most effectual means of preventing that cultivation they are intended to promote. Besides, the whole country is heavily in arrear already for land-taxes and quit-rents. They have different methods of taxation in the different provinces, agreeable to their several local circumstances. In New England by far the greatest part of their revenue is raised by *faculty-taxes* and *capitations*. Such is the method in many others. It is obvious that Parliament, unassisted by the colonies themselves, cannot take so much as a single step in this mode of taxation. Then what

tax is it he will impose ? Why, after all the boasting speeches and writings of his faction for these four years, after all the vain expectations which they have held out to a deluded public, this their great advocate, after twisting the subject every way, after writhing himself in every posture, after knocking at every door, is obliged fairly to abandon every mode of taxation whatsoever in America. He thinks it the best method for Parliament to impose the sum and reserve the account to itself, leaving the mode of taxation to the colonies. But how and in what proportion ?; what does the author say ? O, not a single syllable on this the most material part of the whole question ! Will he, in Parliament, undertake to settle the proportions of such payments from Nova Scotia to Nevis, in no fewer than six-and-twenty different countries, varying in almost every possible circumstance one from another ? If he does, I tell him, he adjourns his revenue to a very long day. If he leaves it to themselves to settle these proportions, he adjourns it to doomsday.

Then what does he get by this method on the side of acquiescence ?; will the people of America relish this course, of giving and granting and applying their money, the better because their assemblies are made commissioners of the taxes ? This is far worse than all his former projects ; for here, if the assemblies shall refuse, or delay, or be negligent, or fraudulent, in this new-imposed duty, we are wholly without remedy ; and neither our custom-house officers, nor our troops, nor our armed ships can be of the least use in the collection. No idea can be more contemptible (I will not call it an oppressive one, the harshness is lost in the folly) than that of proposing to get any revenue from

the Americans but by their freest and most cheerful consent. Most moneyed men know their own interest right well ; and are as able as any financier, in the valuation of risks. Yet I think this financier will scarcely find that adventurer hardy enough, at any premium, to advance a shilling upon a vote of such taxes. Let him name the man, or set of men, that would do it. This is the only proof of the value of revenues ; what would an interested man rate them at ? His subscription would be at ninety-nine per cent. discount the very first day of its opening. Here is our only national security from ruin ; a security upon which no man in his senses would venture a shilling of his fortune. Yet he puts down those articles as gravely in his supply for the peace establishment, as if the money had been all fairly lodged in the exchequer.

American revenue	£200,000
Ireland	100,000

Very handsome indeed ! But if supply is to be got in such a manner, farewell the lucrative mystery of finance ! If you are to be credited for savings, without showing how, why, or with what safety, they are to be made ; and for revenues, without specifying on what articles, or by what means, or at what expense, they are to be collected ; there is not a clerk in a public office who may not outbid this author, or his friend, for the department of chancellor of the exchequer ; not an apprentice in the city, that will not strike out, with the same advantages, the same, or a much larger plan of supply.

Here is the whole of what belongs to the author's scheme for saving us from impending destruction. Take it even in its most favourable point of view, as a thing within possibility ; and imagine what must

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be the wisdom of this gentleman, or his opinion of ours, who could first think of representing this nation in such a state, as no friend can look upon but with horror, and scarcely an enemy without compassion, and afterwards of diverting himself with such inadequate, impracticable, puerile methods for our relief ! If these had been the dreams of some unknown, unnamed, and nameless writer, they would excite no alarm ; their weakness had been an antidote to their malignity. But as they are universally believed to be written by the hand, or, what amounts to the same thing, under the immediate direction, of a person who has been in the management of the highest affairs, and may soon be in the same situation, I think it is not to be reckoned amongst our greatest consolations, that the yet remaining power of this kingdom is to be employed in an attempt to realize notions that are at once so frivolous, and so full of danger. That consideration will justify me in dwelling a little longer on the difficulties of the nation, and the solutions of our author.

I am then persuaded that he cannot be in the least alarmed about our situation, let his outcry be what he pleases. I will give him a reason for my opinion, which, I think, he cannot dispute. All that he bestows upon the nation, which it does not possess without him, and supposing it all sure money, amounts to no more than a sum of £300,000 a year. This, he thinks, will do the business completely, and render us flourishing at home, and respectable abroad. If the option between glory and shame, if our salvation or destruction, depended on this sum, it is impossible that he should have been active, and made a merit of that activity, in taking off a shilling in the pound of the land-tax, which

came up to his grand desideratum and upwards of £100,000 more. By this manœuvre, he left our trade, navigation, and manufactures on the verge of destruction, our finances in ruin, our credit expiring, Ireland on the point of being ceded to France, the colonies of being torn to pieces, the succession of the crown at the mercy of our great rival, and the kingdom itself on the very point of becoming tributary to that haughty power. All this for want of £300,000 ; for I defy the reader to point out any other revenue, or any other precise and defined scheme of politics, which he assigns for our redemption.

I know that two things may be said in his defence, as bad reasons are always at hand in an indifferent cause ; that he was not sure the money would be applied as he thinks it ought to be, by the present ministers. I think as ill of them as he does to the full. They have done very near as much mischief as they can do, to a constitution so robust as this is. Nothing can make them more dangerous, but that, as they are already in general composed of his disciples and instruments, they may add to the public calamity of their own measures, the adoption of his projects. But be the ministers what they may, the author knows that they could not avoid applying this £450,000 to the service of the establishment, as faithfully as he, or any other minister, could do. I say they could not avoid it, and have no merit at all for the application. But supposing that they should greatly mismanage this revenue. Here is a good deal of room for mistake and prodigality before you come to the edge of ruin. The difference between the amount of that real and his imaginary revenue is £150,000 a year at least ; a tolerable sum for them to play with : this might compensate

the difference between the author's economy and their profusion ; and still, notwithstanding their vices and ignorance, the nation might be saved. The author ought also to recollect, that a good man would hardly deny, even to the worst of ministers, the means of doing their duty ; especially in a crisis when our being depended on supplying them with some means or other. In such a case their penury of mind, in discovering resources, would make it rather the more necessary, not to strip such poor providers of the little stock they had in hand.

Besides, here is another subject of distress, and a very serious one, which puts us again to a stand. The author may possibly not come into power (I only state the possibility) : he may not always continue in it : and if the contrary to all this should fortunately for us happen, what insurance on his life can be made for a sum adequate to his loss ? Then we are thus unluckily situated that the *chance* of an American and Irish revenue of £300,000 to be managed by him, is to save us from ruin two or three years hence at best, to make us happy at home and glorious abroad ; and the actual possession of £400,000 English taxes cannot so much as protract our ruin without him. So we are staked on four chances ; his power, its permanence, the success of his projects and the duration of his life. Any one of these failing, we are gone. *Propria hæc si dona fuissent !* This is no unfair representation ; ultimately all hangs on his life, because, in his account of every set of men that have held or supported administration, he finds neither virtue nor ability in any but himself. Indeed he pays (through their measures) some compliments to Lord Bute and Lord Despensers. But to the latter, this is, I suppose, but a civility to old acquaintance : to the former a

little stroke of politics. We may therefore fairly say, that our only hope is his life ; and he has, to make it the more so, taken care to cut off any resource which we possessed independently of him.

In the next place it may be said, to excuse any appearance of inconsistency between the author's actions and his declarations, that he thought it right to relieve the landed interest, and lay the burden where it ought to lie, on the colonies. What !, to take off a revenue so necessary to our being, before anything whatsoever was acquired in the place of it ? In prudence, he ought to have waited at least for the first quarter's receipt of the new anonymous American revenue, and Irish land-tax. Is there something so specific for our disorders in American, and something so poisonous in English money, that one is to heal, the other to destroy us ? To say that the landed interest *could* not continue to pay it for a year or two longer is more than the author will attempt to prove. To say that they *would* pay it no longer is to treat the landed interest, in my opinion, very scurvily. To suppose that the gentry, clergy, and freeholders of England do not rate the commerce, the credit, the religion, the liberty, the independency of their country, and the succession of their crown, at a shilling in the pound land-tax ! They never gave him reason to think so meanly of them. And, if I am rightly informed, when that measure was debated in Parliament, a very different reason was assigned by the author's great friend, as well as by others, for that reduction : one very different from the critical and almost desperate state of our finances. Some people then endeavoured to prove, that the reduction might be made without detriment to the national credit, or the due support of a proper peace establishment ; otherwise it is

obvious that the reduction could not be defended in argument. So that this author cannot despair so much of the commonwealth, without this American and Irish revenue, as he pretends to do. If he does, the reader sees how handsomely he has provided for us, by voting away one revenue, and by giving us a pamphlet on the other.

I do not mean to blame the relief which was then given by Parliament to the land. It was grounded on very weighty reasons. The administration contended only for its continuance for a year, in order to have the merit of taking off the shilling in the pound immediately before the elections; and thus to bribe the freeholders of England with their own money.

It is true, the author, in his estimate of ways and means, takes credit for £400,000 a year, *Indian Revenue*. But he will not very positively insist, that we should put this revenue to the account of his plans or his power; and for a very plain reason: we are already near two years in possession of it. By what means we came to that possession, is a pretty long story; however, I shall give nothing more than a short abstract of the proceeding, in order to see whether the author will take to himself any part in that measure.

The fact is this: the East India Company had for a good while solicited the ministry for a negotiation, by which they proposed to pay largely for some advantages in their trade, and for the renewal of their charter. This had been the former method of transacting with that body. Government having only leased the monopoly for short terms, the Company has been obliged to resort to it frequently for renewals. These two parties had always negotiated (on the true principle of credit) not as government

and subject, but as equal dealers, on the footing of mutual advantage. The public had derived great benefit from such dealing. But at that time new ideas prevailed. The ministry, instead of listening to the proposals of that Company, chose to set up a claim of the Crown to their possessions. The original plan seems to have been, to get the House of Commons to compliment the Crown with a sort of juridical declaration of a title to the Company's acquisitions in India ; which the Crown on its part, with the best air in the world, was to bestow upon the public. Then it would come to the turn of the House of Commons again to be liberal and grateful to the Crown. The Civil List debts were to be paid off ; with perhaps a pretty augmentation of income. All this was to be done on the most public-spirited principles, and with a politeness and mutual interchange of good offices, that could not but have charmed. But what was best of all, these civilities were to be without a farthing of charge to either of the kind and obliging parties. The East India Company was to be covered with infamy and disgrace, and at the same time was to pay the whole bill.

In consequence of this scheme, the terrors of a parliamentary inquiry were hung over them. A judicature was asserted in Parliament to try this question. But lest this judicial character should chance to inspire certain stubborn ideas of law and right, it was argued, that the judicature was arbitrary, and ought not to determine by the rules of law, but by their opinion of policy and expediency. Nothing exceeded the violence of some of the managers, except their impotence. They were bewildered by their passions, and by their want of knowledge or want of consideration of the subject. The more they advanced, the further they found themselves

from their object.—All things ran into confusion. The ministers quarrelled among themselves. They disclaimed one another. They suspended violence, and shrunk from treaty. The inquiry was almost at its last gasp ; when some active persons of the Company were given to understand that this hostile proceeding was only set up *in terrorem* ; that government was far from an intention of seizing upon the possessions of the Company. Administration, they said, was sensible, that the idea was in every light full of absurdity ; and that such a seizure was not more out of their power, than remote from their wishes ; and therefore, if the Company would come in a liberal manner to the House, they certainly could not fail of putting a speedy end to this disagreeable business, and of opening a way to an advantageous treaty.

On this hint the Company acted : they came at once to a resolution of getting rid of the difficulties which arose from the complication of their trade with their revenue ; a step which despoiled them of their best defensive armour, and put them at once into the power of administration. They threw their whole stock of every kind, the revenue, the trade, and even their debt from government, into one fund, which they computed on the surest grounds would amount to £800,000, with a large probable surplus for the payment of debt. Then they agreed to divide this sum in equal portions between themselves and the public, £400,000 to each. This gave to the proprietors of that fund an annual augmentation of no more than £80,000 dividend. They ought to receive from government £120,000 for the loan of their capital. So that, in fact, the whole, which on this plan they reserved to themselves, from their vast revenues, from their extensive trade,

and in consideration of the great risks and mighty expenses which purchased these advantages, amounted to no more than £280,000, whilst government was to receive, as I said, £400,000.

This proposal was thought by themselves liberal indeed ; and they expected the highest applauses for it. However, their reception was very different from their expectations. When they brought up their plan to the House of Commons, the offer, as it was natural, of £400,000 was very well relished. But nothing could be more disgusting than the £80,000 which the Company had divided amongst themselves. A violent tempest of public indignation and fury rose against them. The heads of people turned. The Company was held well able to pay £400,000 a year to government ; but bankrupts, if they attempted to divide the fifth part of it among themselves. An *ex post facto* law was brought in with great precipitation, for annulling this dividend. In the bill was inserted a clause, which suspended for about a year the right, which, under the public faith, the Company enjoyed, of making their own dividends. Such was the disposition and temper of the House, that although the plain face of facts, reason, arithmetic, all the authority, parts, and eloquence in the kingdom, were against this bill ; though all the Chancellors of the Exchequer, who had held that office from the beginning of this reign, opposed it ; yet a few placemen of the subordinate departments sprung out of their ranks, took the lead, and, by an opinion of some sort of secret support, carried the bill with a high hand, leaving the then Secretary of State and the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a very moderate minority. In this distracted situation, the managers of the bill, notwithstanding their triumph, did not venture to

propose the payment of the civil list debt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in good humour enough, after his late defeat by his own troops, to co-operate in such a design ; so they made an act, to lock up the money in the exchequer until they should have time to look about them, and settle among themselves what they were to do with it.

Thus ended this unparalleled transaction. The author, I believe, will not claim any part of the glory of it : he will leave it whole and entire to the authors of the measure. The money was the voluntary, free gift of the Company ; the rescinding bill was the act of legislature, to which they and we owe submission : the author has nothing to do with the one or with the other. However, he cannot avoid rubbing himself against this subject merely for the pleasure of stirring controversies, and gratifying a certain pruriency of taxation that seems to infect his blood. It is merely to indulge himself in speculations of taxing, that he chooses to harangue on this subject. For he takes credit for no greater sum than the public is already in possession of. He does not hint that the Company means, or has ever shown any disposition, if managed with common prudence, to pay less in future ; and he cannot doubt that the present ministry are as well inclined to drive them by their mock inquiries, and real rescinding bills, as he can possibly be with his taxes. Besides, it is obvious, that as great a sum might have been drawn from that Company, without affecting property, or shaking the constitution, or endangering the principle of public credit, or running into his golden dreams of cockets on the Ganges, or visions of stamp duties on *Perwannas*, *Dusticks*, *Kistbundeas*, and *Husbulhookums*. For once, I will disap-

point him in this part of the dispute ; and only in a very few words recommend to his consideration, how he is to get off the dangerous idea of taxing a public fund, if he levies those duties in England ; and if he is to levy them in India, what provision he has made for a revenue establishment there ; supposing that he undertakes this new scheme of finance independently of the Company, and against its inclinations.

So much for these revenues ; which are nothing but his visions, or already the national possessions without any act of his. It is easy to parade with a high talk of Parliamentary rights, of the universality of legislative powers, and of uniform taxation. Men of sense, when new projects come before them, always think a discourse proving the mere right or mere power of acting in the manner proposed, to be no more than a very unpleasant way of mispending time. They must see the object to be of proper magnitude to engage them ; they must see the means of compassing it to be next to certain ; the mischiefs not to counterbalance the profit ; they will examine how a proposed imposition or regulation agrees with the opinion of those who are likely to be affected by it ; they will not despise the consideration even of their habitudes and prejudices. They wish to know how it accords or disagrees with the true spirit of prior establishments, whether of government or of finance ; because they well know, that in the complicated economy of great kingdoms, and immense revenues, which in a length of time, and by a variety of accidents have coalesced into a sort of body, an attempt towards a compulsory equality in all circumstances, and an exact practical definition of the supreme rights in every case, is the most dangerous and chimerical of all enterprises. The old building

stands well enough, though part Gothic, part Grecian, and part Chinese, until an attempt is made to square it into uniformity. Then it may come down upon our heads altogether, in much uniformity of ruin ; and great will be the fall thereof. Some people, instead of inclining to debate the matter, only feel a sort of nausea, when they are told, that 'protection calls for supply,' and that 'all the parts ought to contribute to the support of the whole.' Strange argument for great and grave deliberation ! As if the same end may not, and must not, be compassed, according to its circumstances, by a great diversity of ways. Thus, in Great Britain, some of our establishments are apt for the support of credit. They stand therefore upon a principle of their own, distinct from, and in some respects contrary to, the relation between prince and subject. It is a new species of contract superinduced upon the old contract of the state. The idea of power must as much as possible be banished from it ; for power and credit are things adverse, incompatible ; *Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur*. Such establishments are our great *moneyed* companies. To tax them would be critical and dangerous, and contradictory to the very purpose of their institution ; which is credit, and cannot therefore be taxation. But the nation, when it gave up that power, did not give up the advantage ; but supposed, and with reason, that government was overpaid in credit, for what it seemed to lose in authority. In such a case to talk of the rights of sovereignty is quite idle. Other establishments supply other modes of public contribution. Our *trading* companies, as well as individual importers, are a fit subject of revenue by customs. Some establishments pay us by a *monopoly* of their

consumption and their produce. This, nominally no tax, in reality comprehends all taxes. Such establishments are our colonies. To tax them would be as erroneous in policy, as rigorous in equity. Ireland supplies us by furnishing troops in war ; and by bearing part of our foreign establishment in peace. She aids us at all times by the money that her absentees spend amongst us ; which is no small part of the rental of that kingdom. Thus Ireland contributes her part. Some objects bear port-duties. Some are fitter for an inland excise. The mode varies, the object is the same. To strain these from their old and inveterate leanings, might impair the old benefit, and not answer the end of the new project. Among all the great men of antiquity, *Procrustes* shall never be my hero of legislation ; with his iron bed, the allegory of his government, and the type of some modern policy, by which the long limb was to be cut short, and the short tortured into length. Such was the state-bed of uniformity ! He would, I conceive, be a very indifferent farmer, who complained that his sheep did not plough, or his horses yield him wool, though it would be an idea full of equality. They may think this right in rustic economy, who think it available in the politic :

Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Mævi !
Atque idem jungat vulpes, et mulgeat hircos.

As the author has stated this Indian taxation for no visible purpose relative to his plan of supply, so he has stated many other projects with as little, if any distinct end ; unless perhaps to show you how full he is of projects for the public good ; and what vast expectations may be formed of him or his friends, if they should be translated into admin-

istration. It is also from some opinion that these speculations may one day become our public measures, that I think it worth while to trouble the reader at all about them.

Two of them stand out in high relieve beyond the rest. The first is a change in the internal representation of this country, by enlarging our number of constituents. The second is an addition to our representatives, by new American members of Parliament. I pass over here all considerations how far such a system will be an improvement of our constitution according to any sound theory. Not that I mean to condemn such speculative inquiries concerning this great object of the national attention. They may tend to clear doubtful points, and possibly may lead, as they have often done, to real improvements. What I object to, is their introduction into a discourse relating to the immediate state of our affairs, and recommending plans of practical government. In this view, I see nothing in them but what is usual with the author ; an attempt to raise discontent in the people of England, to balance those discontents which the measures of his friends had already raised in America. What other reason can he have for suggesting, that we are not happy enough to enjoy a sufficient number of voters in England ? I believe that most sober thinkers on this subject are rather of opinion, that our fault is on the other side ; and that it would be more in the spirit of our constitution, and more agreeable to the pattern of our best laws, by lessening the number, to add to the weight and independency of our voters. And truly, considering the immense and dangerous charge of elections ; the prostitute and daring venality, the corruption of manners, the idleness and

profligacy of the lower sort of voters, no prudent man would propose to increase such an evil, if it be, as I fear it is, out of our power to administer to it any remedy. The author proposes nothing further. If he has any improvements that may balance or may lessen this inconvenience, he has thought proper to keep them as usual in his own breast. Since he has been so reserved, I should have wished he had been as cautious with regard to the project itself. First, because he observes justly, that his scheme, however it might improve the platform, can add nothing to the authority of the legislature; much I fear, it will have a contrary operation; for, authority depending on opinion at least as much as on duty, an idea circulated among the people that our constitution is not so perfect as it ought to be, before you are sure of mending it, is a certain method of lessening it in the public opinion. Of this irreverent opinion of Parliament, the author himself complains in one part of his book; and he endeavours to increase it in the other.

Has he well considered what an immense operation any change in our constitution is?, how many discussions, parties, and passions, it will necessarily excite; and when you open it to inquiry in one part, where the inquiry will stop? Experience shows us, that no time can be fit for such changes but a time of general confusion; when good men, finding everything already broken up, think it right to take advantage of the opportunity of such derangement in favour of an useful alteration. Perhaps a time of the greatest security and tranquillity both at home and abroad may likewise be fit; but will the author affirm this to be just such a time? Transferring an idea of military to civil prudence, he ought to know how dangerous it is to

make an alteration of your disposition in the face of an enemy.

Now comes his American representation. Here too, as usual, he takes no notice of any difficulty, nor says anything to obviate those objections that must naturally arise in the minds of his readers. He throws you his politics as he does his revenue ; do you make something of them if you can. Is not the reader a little astonished at the proposal of an American representation from that quarter ? It is proposed merely as a project of speculative improvement ; not from the necessity in the case, not to add anything to the authority of Parliament, but that we may afford a greater attention to the concerns of the Americans, and give them a better opportunity of stating their grievances, and of obtaining redress. I am glad to find the author has at length discovered that we have not given a sufficient attention to their concerns, or a proper redress to their grievances. His great friend would once have been exceedingly displeased with any person, who should tell him, that he did not attend sufficiently to those concerns. He thought he did so, when he regulated the colonies over and over again : he thought he did so when he formed two general systems of revenue ; one of port-duties, and the other of internal taxation. These systems supposed, or ought to suppose, the greatest attention to, and the most detailed information of, all their affairs. However, by contending for the American representation, he seems at last driven virtually to admit, that great caution ought to be used in the exercise of *all* our legislative rights over an object so remote from our eye, and so little connected with our immediate feelings ; that in prudence we ought not to be quite so ready with our taxes, until

we can secure the desired representation in Parliament. Perhaps it may be some time before this hopeful scheme can be brought to perfect maturity, although the author seems to be in no wise aware of any obstructions that lie in the way of it. He talks of his union, just as he does of his taxes and his savings, with as much *sang froid* and ease as if his wish and the enjoyment were exactly the same thing. He appears not to have troubled his head with the infinite difficulty of settling that representation on a fair balance of wealth and numbers throughout the several provinces of America and the West Indies, under such an infinite variety of circumstances. It costs him nothing to fight with nature, and to conquer the order of Providence, which manifestly opposes itself to the possibility of such a Parliamentary union.

But let us, to indulge his passion for projects and power, suppose the happy time arrived, when the author comes into the ministry, and is to realize his speculations. The writs are issued for electing members for America and the West Indies. Some provinces receive them in six weeks, some in ten, some in twenty. A vessel may be lost, and then some provinces may not receive them at all. But let it be, that they all receive them at once, and in the shortest time. A proper space must be given for proclamation and for the election; some weeks at least. But the members are chosen; and if ships are ready to sail, in about six more they arrive in London. In the mean time the Parliament has sat and business far advanced without American representatives. Nay, by this time, it may happen that the Parliament is dissolved; and then the members ship themselves again, to be again elected. The writs may arrive in America, before the poor

members of a Parliament in which they never sat, can arrive at their several provinces. A new interest is formed, and they find other members are chosen whilst they are on the high seas. But, if the writs and members arrive together, here is at best a new trial of skill amongst the candidates, after one set of them have well aired themselves with their two voyages of 6,000 miles.

However, in order to facilitate everything to the author, we will suppose them all once more elected, and steering again to Old England, with a good heart, and a fair westerly wind in their stern. On their arrival, they find all in a hurry and bustle; in and out; condolence and congratulation; the crown is demised. Another Parliament is to be called. Away back to America again on a fourth voyage, and to a third election. Does the author mean to make our kings as immortal in their personal as in their politic character?; or whilst he bountifully adds to their life, will he take from them their prerogative of dissolving Parliaments, in favour of the American union?; or are the American representatives to be perpetual, and to feel neither demises of the crown, nor dissolutions of Parliament?

But these things may be granted to him, without bringing him much nearer to his point. What does he think of re-election?; is the American member the only one who is not to take a place, or the only one to be exempted from the ceremony of re-election? How will this great politician preserve the rights of electors, the fairness of returns, and the privilege of the House of Commons, as the sole judge of such contests? It would undoubtedly be a glorious sight to have eight or ten petitions, or double returns, from Boston and Barbadoes, from

Philadelphia and Jamaica, the members returned, and the petitioners, with all their train of attorneys, solicitors, mayors, selectmen, provost-marshals, and above five hundred or a thousand witnesses, come to the bar of the House of Commons. Possibly we might be interrupted in the enjoyment of this pleasing spectacle, if a war should break out, and our constitutional fleet, loaded with members of Parliament, returning-officers, petitions, and witnesses, the electors and elected, should become a prize to the French or Spaniards, and be conveyed to Carthagena, or to La Vera Cruz, and from thence perhaps to Mexico or Lima, there to remain until a cartel for members of Parliament can be settled, or until the war is ended.

In truth the author has little studied this business; or he might have known, that some of the most considerable provinces of America, such, for instance, as Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay, have not in each of them two men who can afford, at a distance from their estates, to spend a thousand pounds a year. How can these provinces be represented at Westminster? If their province pays them, they are American agents, with salaries, and not independent members of Parliament. It is true, that formerly in England members had salaries from their constituents; but they all had salaries, and were all, in this way, upon a par. If these American representatives have no salaries, then they must add to the list of our pensioners and dependents at court, or they must starve. There is no alternative.

Enough of this visionary union; in which much extravagance appears without any fancy, and the judgment is shocked without anything to refresh the imagination. It looks as if the author had dropped down from the moon without any knowledge of

the general nature of this globe, of the general nature of its inhabitants, without the least acquaintance with the affairs of this country. Governor Pownall has handled the same subject. To do him justice, he treats it upon far more rational principles of speculation ; and much more like a man of business. He thinks (erroneously, I conceive ; but he does think) that our legislative rights are incomplete without such a representation. It is no wonder, therefore, that he endeavours by every means to obtain it. Not like our author, who is always on velvet, he is aware of some difficulties ; and he proposes some solutions. But nature is too hard for both these authors ; and America is, and ever will be, without actual representation in the House of Commons ; nor will any minister be wild enough even to propose such a representation in Parliament ; however he may choose to throw out that project, together with others equally far from his real opinions, and remote from his designs, merely to fall in with the different views, and captivate the affections, of different sorts of men.

Whether these projects arise from the author's real political principles, or are only brought out in subservience to his political views, they compose the whole of anything that is like precise and definite, which the author has given us to expect from that administration which is so much the subject of his praises and prayers. As to his general propositions, that ' there is a deal of difference between impossibilities and great difficulties ' ; that ' a great scheme cannot be carried unless made the business of successive administrations ' ; that ' virtuous and able men are the fittest to serve their country ' ; all this I look on as no more than so much rubble to fill up the spaces between the

regular masonry. Pretty much in the same light I cannot forbear considering his detached observations on commerce ; such as that 'the system for colony regulations would be very simple, and mutually beneficial to Great Britain and her colonies, if the old navigation laws were adhered to.' That 'the transportation should be in all cases in ships belonging to British subjects.' That 'even British ships should not be *generally* received into the colonies from any part of Europe, except the dominions of Great Britain.' That 'it is unreasonable that corn and such like products should be restrained to come first to a British port.' What do all these fine observations signify ? Some of them condemn, as ill practices, things that were never practised at all. Some recommend to be done, things that always have been done. Others indeed convey, though obliquely and loosely, some insinuations highly dangerous to our commerce. If I could prevail on myself to think the author meant to ground any practice upon these general propositions, I should think it very necessary to ask a few questions about some of them. For instance, what does he mean by talking of an adherence to the old navigation laws ? Does he mean, that the particular law, 12 Car. II c. 19, commonly called 'The Act of Navigation', is to be adhered to, and that the several subsequent additions, amendments, and exceptions, ought to be all repealed ? If so, he will make a strange havoc in the whole system of our trade laws, which have been universally acknowledged to be full as well founded in the alterations and exceptions, as the act of Charles the Second in the original provisions ; and to pursue full as wisely the great end of that very politic law, the increase of the British navigation. I fancy the writer could

hardly propose anything more alarming to those immediately interested in that navigation than such a repeal. If he does not mean this, he has got no farther than a nugatory proposition, which nobody can contradict, and for which no man is the wiser.

That 'the regulations for the colony trade would be few and simple if the old navigation laws were adhered to', I utterly deny as a fact. That they ought to be so sounds well enough; but this proposition is of the same nugatory nature with some of the former. The regulations for the colony trade ought not to be more nor fewer, nor more nor less complex, than the occasion requires. And, as that trade is in a great measure a system of art and restriction, they can neither be few nor simple. It is true, that the very principle may be destroyed, by multiplying to excess the means of securing it. Never did a minister depart more from the author's ideas of simplicity, or more embarrass the trade of America with the multiplicity and intricacy of regulations and ordinances, than his boasted minister of 1764. That minister seemed to be possessed with something, hardly short of a rage, for regulation and restriction. He had so multiplied bonds, certificates, affidavits, warrants, sufferances, and cockets; had supported them with such severe penalties, and extended them without the least consideration of circumstances to so many objects, that, had they all continued in their original force, commerce must speedily have expired under them. Some of them, the ministry which gave them birth was obliged to destroy: with their own hand they signed the condemnation of their own regulations; confessing in so many words, in the preamble of their act of the 5th Geo. III, that some

of these regulations had laid *an unnecessary restraint on the trade and correspondence of his Majesty's American subjects*. This, in that ministry, was a candid confession of a mistake ; but every alteration made in those regulations by their successors is to be the effect of envy, and American misrepresentation. So much for the author's simplicity in regulation.

I have now gone through all which I think immediately essential in the author's idea of war, of peace, of the comparative states of England and France, of our actual situation ; in his projects of economy, of finance, of commerce, and of constitutional improvement. There remains nothing now to be considered, except his heavy censures upon the administration which was formed in 1765 ; which is commonly known by the name of the Marquis of Rockingham's administration, as the administration which preceded it is by that of Mr Grenville. These censures relate chiefly to three heads :—1. To the repeal of the American Stamp Act. 2. To the commercial regulations then made. 3. To the course of foreign negotiations during that short period.

A person who knew nothing of public affairs but from the writings of this author, would be led to conclude, that, at the time of the change in June, 1765, some well-digested system of administration, founded in national strength, and in the affections of the people, proceeding in all points with the most reverential and tender regard to the laws, and pursuing with equal wisdom and success everything which could tend to the internal prosperity, and to the external honour and dignity of this country, had been all at once subverted, by an irruption of a sort of wild, licentious, unprincipled invaders, who

wantonly, and with a barbarous rage, had defaced a thousand fair monuments of the constitutional and political skill of their predecessors. It is natural indeed that this author should have some dislike to the administration which was formed in 1765. Its views, in most things, were different from those of his friends ; in some, altogether opposite to them. It is impossible that both of these administrations should be the objects of public esteem. Their different principles compose some of the strongest political lines which discriminate the parties even now subsisting amongst us. The ministers of 1764 are not indeed followed by very many in their opposition ; yet a large part of the people now in office entertain, or pretend to entertain, sentiments entirely conformable to theirs ; whilst some of the former colleagues of the ministry which was formed in 1765, however they may have abandoned the connection, and contradicted by their conduct the principles of their former friends, pretend, on their parts, still to adhere to the same maxims. All the lesser divisions, which are indeed rather names of personal attachment than of party distinction, fall in with the one or the other of these leading parties.

I intend to state, as shortly as I am able, the general condition of public affairs, and the disposition of the minds of men, at the time of the remarkable change of system in 1765. The reader will have thereby a more distinct view of the comparative merits of these several plans, and will receive more satisfaction concerning the ground and reason of the measures which were then pursued, than, I believe, can be derived from the perusal of those partial representations contained in the *State of the Nation*, and the other writings of those who have

continued, for now nearly three years, in the undisturbed possession of the press. This will, I hope, be some apology for my dwelling a little on this part of the subject.

On the resignation of the Earl of Bute, in 1763, our affairs had been delivered into the hands of three ministers of his recommendation: Mr Grenville, the Earl of Egremont, and the Earl of Halifax. This arrangement, notwithstanding the retirement of Lord Bute, announced to the public a continuance of the same measures; nor was there more reason to expect a change from the death of the Earl of Egremont. The Earl of Sandwich supplied his place. The Duke of Bedford, and the gentlemen who act in that connection, and whose general character and politics were sufficiently understood, added to the strength of the ministry, without making any alteration in their plan of conduct. Such was the constitution of the ministry which was changed in 1765.

As to their politics, the principles of the peace of Paris governed in foreign affairs. In domestic, the same scheme prevailed, of contradicting the opinions and disgracing most of the persons, who had been countenanced and employed in the late reign. The inclinations of the people were little attended to; and a disposition to the use of forcible methods ran through the whole tenor of administration. The nation in general was uneasy and dissatisfied. Sober men saw causes for it, in the constitution of the ministry and the conduct of the ministers. The ministers, who have usually a short method on such occasions, attributed their unpopularity wholly to the efforts of faction. However this might be, the licentiousness and tumults of the common people, and the contempt of government of which our author

so often and so bitterly complains, as owing to the mismanagement of the subsequent administrations, had at no time risen to a greater or more dangerous height. The measures taken to suppress that spirit were as violent and licentious as the spirit itself; injudicious, precipitate, and some of them illegal. Instead of allaying, they tended infinitely to inflame the distemper; and whoever will be at the least pains to examine, will find those measures not only the causes of the tumults which then prevailed, but the real sources of almost all the disorders which have arisen since that time. More intent on making a victim to party than an example of justice, they blundered in the method of pursuing their vengeance. By this means a discovery was made of many practices, common indeed in the office of Secretary of State, but wholly repugnant to our laws, and to the genius of the English constitution. One of the worst of these was, the wanton and indiscriminate seizure of papers, even in cases where the safety of the state was not pretended in justification of so harsh a proceeding. The temper of the ministry had excited a jealousy, which made the people more than commonly vigilant concerning every power which was exercised by government. The abuse, however sanctioned by custom, was evident; but the ministry, instead of resting in a prudent inactivity, or (what would have been still more prudent) taking the lead, in quieting the minds of the people and ascertaining the law upon those delicate points, made use of the whole influence of government to prevent a Parliamentary resolution against these practices of office. And lest the colourable reasons, offered in argument against this Parliamentary procedure, should be mistaken for the real motives of their conduct, all the advantage of privilege, all

the arts and finesses of pleading, and great sums of public money were lavished, to prevent any decision upon those practices in the courts of justice. In the meantime, in order to weaken, since they could not immediately destroy, the liberty of the press, the privilege of Parliament was voted away in all accusations for a seditious libel. The freedom of debate in Parliament itself was no less menaced. Officers of the army, of long and meritorious service, and of small fortunes, were chosen as victims for a single vote, by an exertion of ministerial power, which had been very rarely used, and which is extremely unjust, as depriving men not only of a place, but a profession, and is indeed of the most pernicious example both in a civil and a military light.

Whilst all things were managed at home with such a spirit of disorderly despotism, abroad there was a proportionable abatement of all spirit. Some of our most just and valuable claims were in a manner abandoned. This indeed seemed not very inconsistent conduct in the ministers who had made the treaty of Paris. With regard to our domestic affairs, there was no want of industry; but there was a great deficiency of temper and judgment, and manly comprehension of the public interest. The nation certainly wanted relief, and government attempted to administer it. Two ways were principally chosen for this great purpose. The first by regulations; the second by new funds of revenue. Agreeably to this plan, a new naval establishment was formed at a good deal of expense, and to little effect, to aid in the collection of the customs. Regulation was added to regulation; and the strictest and most unreserved orders were given, for a prevention of all contraband trade here,

and in every part of America. A teasing custom-house, and a multiplicity of perplexing regulations, ever have, and ever will appear, the masterpiece of finance to people of narrow views; as a paper against smuggling, and the importation of French finery, never fails of furnishing a very popular column in a newspaper.

The greatest part of these regulations were made for America; and they fell so indiscriminately on all sorts of contraband, or supposed contraband, that some of the most valuable branches of trade were driven violently from our ports; which caused an universal consternation throughout the colonies. Every part of the trade was infinitely distressed by them. Men-of-war now for the first time, armed with regular commissions of custom-house officers, invested the coasts, and gave to the collection of revenue the air of hostile contribution. About the same time that these regulations seemed to threaten the destruction of the only trade from whence the plantations derived any specie, an act was made, putting a stop to the future emission of paper currency, which used to supply its place among them. Hand in hand with this went another act, for obliging the colonies to provide quarters for soldiers. Instantly followed another law, for levying throughout all America new port duties, upon a vast variety of commodities of their consumption, and some of which lay heavy upon objects necessary for their trade and fishery. Immediately upon the heels of these, and amidst the uneasiness and confusion produced by a crowd of new impositions and regulations, some good, some evil, some doubtful, all crude and ill-considered, came another act, for imposing an universal stamp-duty on the colonies; and this was declared to be little more than an experiment,

and a foundation of future revenue. To render these proceedings the more irritating to the colonies, the principal argument used in favour of their ability to pay such duties was the liberality of the grants of their assemblies during the late war. Never could any argument be more insulting and mortifying to a people habituated to the granting of their own money.

Taxes for the purpose of raising revenue had hitherto been sparingly attempted in America. Without ever doubting the extent of its lawful power, Parliament always doubted the propriety of such impositions. And the Americans on their part never thought of contesting a right by which they were so little affected. Their assemblies in the main answered all the purposes necessary to the internal economy of a free people, and provided for all the exigencies of government which arose amongst themselves. In the midst of that happy enjoyment, they never thought of critically settling the exact limits of a power, which was necessary to their union, their safety, their equality, and even their liberty. Thus the two very difficult points, superiority in the presiding state, and freedom in the subordinate, were on the whole sufficiently, that is, practically, reconciled; without agitating those vexatious questions, which in truth rather belong to metaphysics than politics, and which can never be moved without shaking the foundations of the best governments that have ever been constituted by human wisdom. By this measure was let loose that dangerous spirit of disquisition, not in the coolness of philosophical inquiry, but inflamed with all the passions of a haughty, resentful people, who thought themselves deeply injured, and that they were contending for everything that was valuable in the world.

In England, our ministers went on without the least attention to these alarming dispositions ; just as if they were doing the most common things in the most usual way, and among a people not only passive, but pleased. They took no one step to divert the dangerous spirit which began even then to appear in the colonies, to compromise with it, to mollify it, or to subdue it. No new arrangements were made in civil government ; no new powers or instructions were given to governors ; no augmentation was made, or new disposition, of forces. Never was so critical a measure pursued with so little provision against its necessary consequences. As if all common prudence had abandoned the ministers, and as if they meant to plunge themselves and us headlong into that gulf which stood gaping before them ; by giving a year's notice of the project of their Stamp Act, they allowed time for all the discontents of that country to fester and come to a head, and for all the arrangements which factious men could make towards an opposition to the law. At the same time they carefully concealed from the eye of Parliament those remonstrances which they had actually received ; and which in the strongest manner indicated the discontent of some of the colonies, and the consequences which might be expected ; they concealed them even in defiance of an order of council, that they should be laid before Parliament. Thus, by concealing the true state of the case, they rendered the wisdom of the nation as improvident as their own temerity, either in preventing or guarding against the mischief. It has indeed, from the beginning to this hour, been the uniform policy of this set of men, in order at any hazard to obtain a present credit, to propose whatever might be pleasing, as attended with no diffi-

culty ; and afterwards to throw all the disappointment of the wild expectations they had raised, upon those who have the hard task of freeing the public from the consequences of their pernicious projects.

Whilst the commerce and tranquillity of the whole empire were shaken in this manner, our affairs grew still more distracted by the internal dissensions of our ministers. Treachery and ingratitude were charged from one side ; despotism and tyranny from the other ; the vertigo of the regency bill ; the awkward reception of the silk bill in the House of Commons, and the inconsiderate and abrupt rejection of it in the House of Lords ; the strange and violent tumults which arose in consequence, and which were rendered more serious by being charged by the ministers upon one another ; the report of a gross and brutal treatment of the——, by a minister at the same time odious to the people ; all conspired to leave the public, at the close of the session of 1765, in as critical and perilous a situation, as ever the nation was, or could be, in a time when she was not immediately threatened by her neighbours.

It was at this time, and in these circumstances, that a new administration was formed. Professing even industriously, in this public matter, to avoid anecdotes ; I say nothing of those famous reconciliations and quarrels, which weakened the body that should have been the natural support of this administration. I run no risk in affirming, that, surrounded as they were with difficulties of every species, nothing but the strongest and most uncorrupt sense of their duty to the public could have prevailed upon some of the persons who composed it to undertake the king's business at such a time. Their preceding character, their measures while in power, and the subsequent conduct of many of them, I

think, leave no room to charge this assertion to flattery. Having undertaken the commonwealth, what remained for them to do ? ; to piece their conduct upon the broken chain of former measures ? If they had been so inclined, the ruinous nature of those measures, which began instantly to appear, would not have permitted it. Scarcely had they entered into office, when letters arrived from all parts of America, making loud complaints, backed by strong reasons, against several of the principal regulations of the late ministry, as threatening destruction to many valuable branches of commerce. These were attended with representations from many merchants and capital manufacturers at home, who had all their interests involved in the support of lawful trade, and in the suppression of every sort of contraband. Whilst these things were under consideration, that conflagration blazed out at once in North America ; an universal disobedience, and open resistance to the Stamp Act : and, in consequence, an universal stop to the course of justice, and to trade and navigation, throughout that great important country ; an interval during which the trading interest of England lay under the most dreadful anxiety which it ever felt.

The repeal of that act was proposed. It was much too serious a measure, and attended with too many difficulties upon every side, for the then ministry to have undertaken it, as some paltry writers have asserted, from envy and dislike to their predecessors in office. As little could it be owing to personal cowardice, and dread of consequences to themselves. Ministers, timorous from their attachment to place and power, will fear more from the consequences of one court intrigue, than from a thousand difficulties to the commerce and credit of their country by

disturbances at three thousand miles distance. From which of these the ministers had most to apprehend at that time, is known, I presume, universally. Nor did they take that resolution from a want of the fullest sense of the inconveniences which must necessarily attend a measure of concession from the sovereign to the subject. That it must increase the insolence of the mutinous spirits in America, was but too obvious. No great measure indeed, at a very difficult crisis, can be pursued, which is not attended with some mischief ; none but conceited pretenders in public business will hold any other language : and none but weak and unexperienced men will believe them, if they should. If we were found in such a crisis, let those, whose bold designs, and whose defective arrangements, brought us into it, answer for the consequences. The business of the then ministry evidently was, to take such steps, not as the wishes of our author, or as their own wishes dictated, but as the bad situation in, which their predecessors had left them, absolutely required.

The disobedience to this act was universal throughout America ; nothing, it was evident, but the sending a very strong military, backed by a very strong naval force, would reduce the seditious to obedience. To send it to one town, would not be sufficient ; every province of America must be traversed, and must be subdued. I do not entertain the least doubt but this could be done. We might, I think, without much difficulty, have destroyed our colonies. This destruction might be effected, probably in a year, or in two at the utmost. If the question was upon a foreign nation, where every successful stroke adds to your own power, and takes from that of a rival, a just war with such a

certain superiority would be undoubtedly an advisable measure. But *four million* of debt due to our merchants, the total cessation of a trade annually worth *four million* more, a large foreign traffic, much home manufacture, a very capital immediate revenue arising from colony imports, indeed the produce of every one of our revenues greatly depending on this trade, all these were very weighty accumulated considerations, at least well to be weighed, before that sword was drawn, which even by its victories must produce all the evil effects of the greatest national defeat. How public credit must have suffered, I need not say. If the condition of the nation, at the close of our foreign war, was what this author represents it, such a civil war would have been a bad couch, on which to repose our wearied virtue. Far from being able to have entered into new plans of economy, we must have launched into a new sea, I fear a boundless sea, of expense. Such an addition of debt, with such a diminution of revenue and trade, would have left us in no want of a *State of the Nation* to aggravate the picture of our distresses.

Our trade felt this to its vitals; and our then ministers were not ashamed to say, that they sympathized with the feelings of our merchants. The universal alarm of the whole trading body of England, will never be laughed at by them as an ill-grounded or a pretended panic. The universal desire of that body will always have great weight with them in every consideration connected with commerce: neither ought the opinion of that body to be slighted (notwithstanding the contemptuous and indecent language of this author and his associates) in any consideration whatsoever of revenue. Nothing amongst us is more quickly or deeply affected

by taxes of any kind than trade ; and if an American tax was a real relief to England, no part of the community would be sooner or more materially relieved by it than our merchants. But they well know that the trade of England must be more burdened by one penny raised in America, than by three in England ; and if that penny be raised with the uneasiness, the discontent, and the confusion of America, more than by ten.

If the opinion and wish of the landed interest is a motive, and it is a fair and just one, for taking away a real and large revenue, the desire of the trading interest of England ought to be a just ground for taking away a tax of little better than speculation, which was to be collected by a war, which was to be kept up with the perpetual discontent of those who were to be affected by it, and the value of whose produce even after the *ordinary* charges of collection, was very uncertain * ; after the *extraordinary*, the dearest purchased revenue that ever was made by any nation.

These were some of the motives drawn from principles of convenience for that repeal. When the object came to be more narrowly inspected, every motive concurred. These colonies were evidently founded in subservience to the commerce of Great Britain. From this principle, the whole system of our laws concerning them became a system of restriction. A double monopoly was established on the part of the

* It is observable, that the partisans of American taxation, when they have a mind to represent this tax as wonderfully beneficial to England, state it as worth £100,000 a year ; when they are to represent it as very light on the Americans, it dwindles to £60,000. Indeed, it is very difficult to compute what its produce might have been.

parent country ; 1. A monopoly of their whole import, which is to be altogether from Great Britain ; 2. A monopoly of all their export, which is to be nowhere but to Great Britain, as far as it can serve any purpose here. On the same idea it was contrived that they should send all their products to us raw, and in their first state ; and that they should take everything from us in the last stage of manufacture.

Were ever a people under such circumstances, that is, a people who were to export raw, and to receive manufactured, and this, not a few luxurious articles, but all articles, even to those of the grossest, most vulgar, and necessary consumption, a people who were in the hands of a general monopolist, were ever such a people suspected of a possibility of becoming a just object of revenue ? All the ends of their foundation must be supposed utterly contradicted before they could become such an object. Every trade law we have made must have been eluded, and become useless, before they could be in such a condition.

The partisans of the new system, who, on most occasions, take credit for full as much knowledge as they possess, think proper on this occasion to counterfeit an extraordinary degree of ignorance, and in consequence of it to assert, ' that the balance (between the colonies and Great Britain) is unknown, and that no important conclusion can be drawn from premises so very uncertain.' Now to what can this ignorance be owing ? ; were the navigation laws made, that this balance should be unknown ? ; is it from the course of exchange that it is unknown, which all the world knows to be greatly and perpetually against the colonies ? ; is it from the doubtful nature of the trade we carry on with the colonies ? ; are not these schemists well apprised that

the colonists, particularly those of the northern provinces, import more from Great Britain, ten times more, than they send in return to us ?, that a great part of their foreign balance is and must be remitted to London ? I shall be ready to admit that the colonies ought to be taxed to the revenues of this country, when I know that they are out of debt to its commerce. This author will furnish some ground to his theories, and communicate a discovery to the public, if he can show this by any medium. But he tells us that 'their seas are covered with ships and their rivers floating with commerce.' This is true. But it is with *our* ships that these seas are covered ; and their rivers float with British commerce. The American merchants are our factors ; all in reality, most even in name. The Americans trade, navigate, cultivate, with English capitals ; to their own advantage, to be sure ; for without these capitals their ploughs would be stopped, and their ships wind-bound. But he who furnishes the capital must, on the whole, be the person principally benefited ; the person who works upon it profits on his part too ; but he profits in a subordinate way, as our colonies do ; that is, as the servant of a wise and indulgent master, and no otherwise. We have all, except the *peculium* ; without which even slaves will not labour.

If the author's principles, which are the common notions, be right, that the price of our manufactures is so greatly enhanced by our taxes ; then the Americans already pay in that way a share of our impositions. He is not ashamed to assert, that 'France and China may be said, on the same principle, to bear a part of our charges, for they consume our commodities.' Was ever such a method of reasoning heard of ? Do not the laws absolutely confine the colonies to buy from us, whether foreign nations sell cheaper

or not? On what other idea are all our prohibitions, regulations, guards, penalties, and forfeitures framed? To secure to us, not a commercial preference, which stands in need of no penalties to enforce it; it finds its own way; but to secure to us a trade, which is a creature of law and institution. What has this to do with the principles of a foreign trade, which is under no monopoly, and in which we cannot raise the price of our goods, without hazarding the demand for them? None but the authors of such measures could ever think of making use of such arguments.

Whoever goes about to reason on any part of the policy of this country with regard to America, upon the mere abstract principles of government, or even upon those of our own ancient constitution, will be often misled. Those who resort for arguments to the most respectable authorities, ancient or modern, or rest upon the clearest maxims, drawn from the experience of other states and empires, will be liable to the greatest errors imaginable. The object is wholly new in the world. It is singular; it is grown up to this magnitude and importance within the memory of man; nothing in history is parallel to it. All the reasonings about it, that are likely to be at all solid, must be drawn from its actual circumstances. In this new system a principle of commerce, of artificial commerce, must predominate. This commerce must be secured by a multitude of restraints very alien from the spirit of liberty; and a powerful authority must reside in the principal state, in order to enforce them. But the people who are to be the subjects of these restraints are descendants of Englishmen; and of a high and free spirit. To hold over them a government made up of nothing but restraints and

penalties, and taxes in the granting of which they can have no share, will neither be wise nor long practicable. People must be governed in a manner agreeable to their temper and disposition; and men of free character and spirit must be ruled with, at least, some condescension to this spirit and this character. The British colonist must see something which will distinguish him from the colonists of other nations.

Those reasonings, which infer from the many restraints under which we have already laid America to our right to lay it under still more, and indeed under all manner of restraints, are conclusive; conclusive as to right; but the very reverse as to policy and practice. We ought rather to infer from our having laid the colonies under many restraints, that it is reasonable to compensate them by every indulgence that can by any means be reconciled to our interest. We have a great empire to rule, composed of a vast mass of heterogeneous governments, all more or less free and popular in their forms, all to be kept in peace, and kept out of conspiracy, with one another, all to be held in subordination to this country; while the spirit of an extensive and intricate and trading interest pervades the whole, always qualifying, and often controlling, every general idea of constitution and government. It is a great and difficult object; and I wish we may possess wisdom and temper enough to manage it as we ought. Its importance is infinite. I believe the reader will be struck, as I have been, with one singular fact. In the year 1704, but sixty-five years ago, the whole trade with our plantations was but a few thousand pounds more in the export article, and a third less in the import, than that which we now carry on with the single island of Jamaica.

	Exports.	Imports.
Total English plantations in		
1704	£483,265 .	£814,491
Jamaica, 1767	467,681 .	1,243,742

From the same information I find that our dealing with most of the European nations is but little increased : these nations have been pretty much at a stand since that time, and we have rivals in their trade. This colony intercourse is a new world of commerce in a manner created ; it stands upon principles of its own ; principles hardly worth endangering for any little consideration of extorted revenue.

The reader sees, that I do not enter so fully into this matter as obviously I might. I have already been led into greater lengths than I intended. It is enough to say, that before the ministers of 1765 had determined to propose the repeal of the Stamp Act in Parliament, they had the whole of the American constitution and commerce very fully before them. They considered maturely ; they decided with wisdom : let me add, with firmness. For they resolved, as a preliminary to that repeal, to assert in the fullest and least equivocal terms the unlimited legislative right of this country over its colonies ; and, having done this, to propose the repeal, on principles, not of constitutional right, but on those of expediency, of equity, of lenity, and of the true interests present and future of that great object for which alone the colonies were founded, navigation and commerce. This plan I say, required an uncommon degree of firmness, when we consider that some of those persons who might be of the greatest use in promoting the repeal, violently withstood the declaratory act ; and they who agreed with administration in the principles of that law, equally made, as well the reasons on which the

declaratory act itself stood, as those on which it was opposed, grounds for an opposition to the repeal.

If the then ministry resolved first to declare the right, it was not from any opinion they entertained of its future use in regular taxation. Their opinions were full and declared against the ordinary use of such a power. But it was plain, that the general reasonings which were employed against that power went directly to our whole legislative right ; and one part of it could not be yielded to such arguments, without a virtual surrender of all the rest. Besides, if that very specific power of levying money in the colonies were not retained as a sacred trust in the hands of Great Britain (to be used not in the first instance for supply, but in the last exigence for control), it is obvious that the presiding authority of Great Britain, as the head, the arbiter, and director of the whole empire, would vanish into an empty name, without operation or energy. With the habitual exercise of such a power in the ordinary course of supply, no trace of freedom could remain to America*. If Great Britain were stripped of this right, every principle of unity and subordination in the empire was gone forever. Whether all this can be reconciled in legal speculation, is a matter of

* I do not here enter into the unsatisfactory disquisition concerning representation real or presumed. I only say, that a great people who have their property, without any reserve, in all cases, disposed of by another people, at an immense distance from them, will not think themselves in the enjoyment of freedom. It will be hard to show to those who are in such a state, which of the usual parts of the definition or description of a free people are applicable to them ; and it is neither pleasant nor wise to attempt to prove that they have no right to be comprehended in such a description.

no consequence. It is reconciled in policy : and politics ought to be adjusted, not to human reasonings, but to human nature ; of which the reason is but a part, and by no means the greatest part.

Founding the repeal on this basis, it was judged proper to lay before Parliament the whole detail of the American affairs, as fully as it had been laid before the ministry themselves. Ignorance of those affairs had misled Parliament. Knowledge alone could bring it into the right road. Every paper of office was laid upon the table of the two Houses ; every denomination of men, either of America, or connected with it by office, by residence, by commerce, by interest, even by injury ; men of civil and military capacity, officers of the revenue, merchants, manufacturers of every species, and from every town in England, attended at the bar. Such evidence never was laid before Parliament. If an emulation arose among the ministers and members of Parliament, as the author rightly observes, for the repeal of this act, as well as for the other regulations, it was not on the confident assertions, the airy speculations, or the vain promises of ministers, that it arose. It was the sense of Parliament on the evidence before them. No one so much as suspects that ministerial allurements or terrors had any share in it.

Our author is very much displeased, that so much credit was given to the testimony of merchants. He has a habit of railing at them : and he may, if he pleases, indulge himself in it. It will not do great mischief to that respectable set of men. The substance of their testimony was, that their debts in America were very great : that the Americans declined to pay them, or to renew their orders, whilst this act continued : that, under these circum-

stances, they despaired of the recovery of their debts, or the renewal of their trade in that country : that they apprehended a general failure of mercantile credit. The manufacturers deposed to the same general purpose, with this addition, that many of them had discharged several of their artificers ; and, if the law and the resistance to it should continue, must dismiss them all.

This testimony is treated with great contempt by our author. It must be, I suppose, because it was contradicted by the plain nature of things. Suppose then that the merchants had, to gratify this author, given a contrary evidence ; and had deposed, that while America remained in a state of resistance, whilst four million of debt remained unpaid, whilst the course of justice was suspended for want of stamped paper, so that no debt could be recovered, whilst there was a total stop to trade, because every ship was subject to seizure for want of stamped clearances, and while the colonies were to be declared in rebellion, and subdued by armed force, that in these circumstances they would still continue to trade cheerfully and fearlessly as before : would not such witnesses provoke universal indignation for their folly or their wickedness, and be deservedly hooted from the bar* : would any human faith

* Here the author has a note altogether in his usual strain of reasoning ; he finds out that somebody, in the course of this multifarious evidence, had said that a 'very considerable part of the orders of 1765 transmitted from America had been afterwards suspended ; but that in case the Stamp Act was repealed, those orders were to be executed in the present year, 1766' ; and that, on the repeal of the Stamp Act, 'the exports to the colonies would be at least double the value of the exports of the past year.' He then triumphs exceedingly on their having fallen short of it on the state of the custom-house entries.

have given credit to such assertions? The testimony of the merchants was necessary for the detail, and to bring the matter home to the feeling of the

I do not well know what conclusion he draws applicable to his purpose from these facts. He does not deny that all the orders which came from America subsequent to the disturbances of the Stamp Act were on the condition of that act being repealed; and he does not assert that, notwithstanding that act should be enforced by a strong hand, still the orders would be executed. Neither does he quite venture to say that this decline of the trade in 1766 was owing to the repeal. What does he therefore infer from it, favourable to the enforcement of that law? It only comes to this, and no more; those merchants, who thought our trade would be doubled in the subsequent year, were mistaken in their speculations. So that the Stamp Act was not to be repealed unless this speculation of theirs was a probable event. But it was not repealed in order to double our trade in that year, as everybody knows (whatever some merchants might have said), but lest in that year we should have no trade at all. The fact is, that during the greatest part of the year 1765, that is, until about the month of October, when the accounts of the disturbances came thick upon us, the American trade went on as usual. Before this time, the Stamp Act could not affect it. Afterwards, the merchants fell into a great consternation; a general stagnation in trade ensued. But as soon as it was known that the ministry favoured the repeal of the Stamp Act, several of the bolder merchants ventured to execute their orders; others more timid hung back; in this manner the trade continued in a state of dreadful fluctuation between the fears of those who had ventured, for the event of their boldness, and the anxiety of those whose trade was suspended, until the royal assent was finally given to the bill of repeal. That the trade of 1766 was not equal to that of 1765, could not be owing to the repeal; it arose from quite different causes, of which the author seems not to be aware: (i.) Our conquests during the war had laid open the trade of the French and Spanish West Indies to our colonies much more largely than they had ever enjoyed it; this continued for some time after the peace; but at length it was extremely contracted, and in some places reduced to nothing. Such in par-

House ; as to the general reasons, they spoke abundantly for themselves.

Upon these principles was the act repealed, and it produced all the good effect which was expected from it : quiet was restored ; trade generally returned to its ancient channels ; time and means were furnished for the better strengthening of government there, as well as for recovering, by judicious measures, the affections of the people, had that ministry continued, or had a ministry succeeded with dispositions to improve that opportunity.

Such an administration did not succeed. Instead of profiting of that season of tranquillity, in the very next year they chose to return to measures of

particular was the state of Jamaica. On the taking the Havannah all the stores of that island were emptied into that place, which produced unusual orders for goods, for supplying their own consumption, as well as for further speculations of trade. These ceasing, the trade stood on its own bottom. This is one cause of the diminished export to Jamaica ; and not the childish idea of the author, of an impossible contraband from the opening of the ports. (ii.) The war had brought a great influx of cash into America, for the pay and provision of the troops : and this an unnatural increase of trade, which, as its cause failed, must in some degree return to its ancient and natural bounds. (iii.) When the merchants met from all parts, and compared their accounts, they were alarmed at the immensity of the debt due to them from America. They found that the Americans had over-traded their abilities. And, as they found too that several of them were capable of making the state of political events an excuse for their failure in commercial punctuality, many of our merchants in some degree contracted their trade from that moment. However, it is idle, in such an immense mass of trade, so liable to fluctuation, to infer anything from such a deficiency as one or even two hundred thousand pounds. In 1767, when the disturbances subsided, this deficiency was made up again.

the very same nature with those which had been so solemnly condemned ; though upon a smaller scale. The effects have been correspondent. America is again in disorder ; not indeed in the same degree as formerly, nor anything like it. Such good effects have attended the repeal of the Stamp Act, that the colonies have actually paid the taxes ; and they have sought their redress (upon however improper principles) not in their own violence, as formerly * ; but in the experienced benignity of Parliament. They are not easy indeed, nor ever will be so, under this author's schemes of taxation ; but we see no longer the same general fury and confusion, which attended their resistance to the Stamp Act. The author may rail at the repeal, and those who proposed it, as he pleases. Those honest men suffer all his obloquy with pleasure, in the midst of the quiet which they have been the means of giving to their country ; and would think his praises for their perseverance in a pernicious scheme, a very bad compensation for the disturbance of our peace, and the ruin of our commerce. Whether the return to the system of 1764, for raising a revenue in America, the discontents which have ensued in consequence of it, the general suspension of the assemblies in consequence of these discontents, the use of the military power, and the new and dangerous commissions which now hang over them, will produce equally good effects, is greatly to be doubted. Never, I fear, will this nation and the colonies fall back upon their true centre of gravity, and natural point of repose, until the ideas of 1766 are resumed, and steadily pursued.

As to the regulations, a great subject of the

* The disturbances have been in Boston only ; and were not in consequence of the late duties.

author's accusation, they are of two sorts ; one of a mixed nature, of revenue and trade ; the other simply relative to trade. With regard to the former I shall observe, that, in all deliberations concerning America, the ideas of that administration were principally these ; to take trade as the primary end, and revenue but as a very subordinate consideration. Where trade was likely to suffer, they did not hesitate for an instant to prefer it to taxes, whose produce at best was contemptible, in comparison of the object which they might endanger. The other of their principles was, to suit the revenue to the object. Where the difficulty of collection, from the nature of the country, and of the revenue establishment, is so very notorious, it was their policy to hold out as few temptations to smuggling as possible, by keeping the duties as nearly as they could on a balance with the risk. On these principles they made many alterations in the port-duties of 1764, both in the mode and in the quantity. The author has not attempted to prove them erroneous. He complains enough to show that he is in an ill-humour, not that his adversaries have done amiss.

As to the regulations which were merely relative to commerce, many were then made ; and they were all made upon this principle, that many of the colonies, and those some of the most abounding in people, were so situated as to have very few means of traffic with this country. It became therefore our interest to let them into as much foreign trade as could be given them without interfering with our own ; and to secure by every method the returns to the mother country. Without some such scheme of enlargement, it was obvious that any benefit we could expect from these colonies must be extremely limited. Accordingly many facilities were given to

their trade with the foreign plantations, and with the southern parts of Europe. As to the confining the returns to this country, administration saw the mischief and folly of a plan of indiscriminate restraint. They applied their remedy to that part where the disease existed, and to that only: on this idea they established regulations, far more likely to check the dangerous, clandestine trade with Hamburg and Holland, than this author's friends, or any of their predecessors had ever done.

The friends of the author have a method surely a little whimsical in all this sort of discussions. They have made an innumerable multitude of commercial regulations, at which the trade of England exclaimed with one voice, and many of which have been altered on the unanimous opinion of that trade. Still they go on, just as before, in a sort of droning panegyric on themselves, talking of these regulations as prodigies of wisdom; and, instead of appealing to those who are most affected and the best judges, they turn round in a perpetual circle of their own reasonings and pretences; they hand you over from one of their own pamphlets to another: 'See', say they, 'this demonstrated in the *Regulations of the Colonies*.' 'See this satisfactorily proved in *The Considerations*.' By and by we shall have another: 'See for this *The State of the Nation*.' I wish to take another method in vindicating the opposite system. I refer to the petitions of merchants for these regulations; to their thanks when they were obtained; and to the strong and grateful sense they have ever since expressed of the benefits received under that administration.

All administrations have in their commercial regulations been generally aided by the opinion of some merchants; too frequently by that of

a few, and those a sort of favourites: they have been directed by the opinion of one or two merchants, who were to merit in flatteries, and to be paid in contracts; who frequently advised, not for the general good of trade, but for their private advantage. During the administration of which this author complains, the meetings of merchants upon the business of trade were numerous and public; sometimes at the house of the Marquis of Rockingham; sometimes at Mr Dowdeswell's; sometimes at Sir George Savile's, a house always open to every deliberation favourable to the liberty or the commerce of his country. Nor were these meetings confined to the merchants of London. Merchants and manufacturers were invited from all the considerable towns in England. They conferred with the ministers and acted with members of Parliament. No private views, no local interests prevailed. Never were points in trade settled upon a larger scale of information. They who attended these meetings well know what ministers they were who heard the most patiently, who comprehended the most clearly, and who provided the most wisely. Let then this author and his friends still continue in possession of the practice of exalting their own abilities, in their pamphlets and in the newspapers. They never will persuade the public, that the merchants of England were in a general confederacy to sacrifice their own interests to those of North America, and to destroy the vent of their own goods in favour of the manufactures of France and Holland.

Had the friends of this author taken these means of information, his extreme terrors of contraband in the West India islands would have been greatly quieted, and his objections to the opening of the ports would have ceased. He would have learned,

from the most satisfactory analysis of the West India trade, that we have the advantage in every essential article of it ; and that almost every restriction on our communication with our neighbours there, is a restriction unfavourable to ourselves.

Such were the principles that guided, and the authority that sanctioned, these regulations. No man ever said, that, in the multiplicity of regulations made in the administration of their predecessors, none were useful ; some certainly were so ; and I defy the author to show a commercial regulation of that period, which he can prove, from any authority except his own, to have a tendency beneficial to commerce, that has been repealed. So far were that ministry from being guided by a spirit of contradiction or of innovation.

The author's attack on that administration, for their neglect of our claims on foreign powers, is by much the most astonishing instance he has given, or that, I believe, any man ever did give, of an intrepid effrontery. It relates to the Manilla ransom ; to the Canada bills ; and to the Russian treaty. Could one imagine, that these very things, which he thus chooses to object to others, have been the principal subject of charge against his favourite ministry ? Instead of clearing them of these charges, he appears not so much as to have heard of them ; but throws them directly upon the administration which succeeded to that of his friends.

It is not always very pleasant to be obliged to produce the detail of this kind of transactions to the public view. I will content myself therefore with giving a short state of facts, which, when the author chooses to contradict, he shall see proved, more, perhaps, to his conviction, than to his liking. The first fact then is, that the demand for the Manilla

ransom had been in the author's favourite administration so neglected as to appear to have been little less than tacitly abandoned. At home, no countenance was given to the claimants ; and when it was mentioned in Parliament, the then leader did not seem, at least, a *very sanguine advocate in favour of the claim*. These things made it a matter of no small difficulty to resume and press that negotiation with Spain. However, so clear was our right, that the then ministers resolved to revive it ; and so little time was lost, that though that administration was not completed until the 9th of July, 1765, on the 20th of the following August, General Conway transmitted a strong and full remonstrance on that subject to the Earl of Rochfort. The argument, on which the court of Madrid most relied, was the dereliction of that claim by the preceding ministers. However, it was still pushed with so much vigour, that the Spaniards, from a positive denial to pay, offered to refer the demand to arbitration. That proposition was rejected ; and the demand being still pressed, there was all the reason in the world to expect its being brought to a favourable issue ; when it was thought proper to change the administration. Whether under their circumstances, and in the time they continued in power, more could be done, the reader will judge ; who will hear with astonishment a charge of remissness from those very men, whose inactivity, to call it by no worse a name, laid the chief difficulties in the way of the revived negotiation.

As to the Canada bills, this author thinks proper to assert, ' that the proprietors found themselves under a necessity of compounding their demands upon the French court, and accepting terms which they had often rejected, and which the Earl of Hali-

fax had declared he would sooner forfeit his hand than sign.' When I know that the Earl of Halifax says so, the Earl of Halifax shall have an answer; but I persuade myself that his Lordship has given no authority for this ridiculous rant. In the meantime, I shall only speak of it as a common concern of that ministry.

In the first place, then, I observe, that a convention, for the liquidation of the Canada bills, was concluded under the administration of 1766; when nothing was concluded under that of the favourites of this author.

2. This transaction was, in every step of it, carried on in concert with the persons interested, and was terminated to their entire satisfaction. They would have acquiesced perhaps in terms somewhat lower than those which were obtained. The author is indeed too kind to them. He will, however, let them speak for themselves, and show what their own opinion was of the measures pursued in their favour*. In what manner the execution of the convention has been since provided for, it is not my present business to examine.

* 'They are happy in having found, in your zeal for the dignity of this nation, the means of liquidating their claims, and of concluding with the court of France a convention for the final satisfaction of their demands; and have given us commission, in their names, and on their behalf, most earnestly to entreat your acceptance of their grateful acknowledgments. Whether they consider themselves as Britons, or as men more particularly profiting by your generous and spirited interposition, they see great reasons to be thankful, for having been supported by a minister, in whose public affections, in whose wisdom and activity, both the national honour, and the interests of individuals, have been at once so well supported and secured.'—Thanks of the Canada merchants to General Conway, London, April, 28, 1766.

3. The proprietors had absolutely despaired of being paid, at any time, any proportion of their demand, until the change of that ministry. The merchants were checked and discountenanced; they had often been told, by some in authority, of the cheap rate at which these Canada bills had been procured; yet the author can talk of the composition of them as a necessity induced by the change in administration. They found themselves indeed, before that change, under a necessity of hinting somewhat of bringing the matter into Parliament; but they were soon silenced, and put in mind of the fate which the Newfoundland business had there met with. Nothing struck them more than the strong contrast between the spirit, and method of proceeding, of the two administrations.

4. The Earl of Halifax never did, nor could, refuse to sign this convention; because this convention, as it stands, never was before him.

The author's last charge on that ministry, with regard to foreign affairs, is the Russian treaty of commerce, which the author thinks fit to assert, was concluded 'on terms the Earl of Buckinghamshire had refused to accept of, and which had been deemed by former ministers disadvantageous to the nation, and by the merchants unsafe and unprofitable.'

Both the assertions in this paragraph are equally groundless. The treaty then concluded by Sir George Macartney was not on the terms which the Earl of Buckinghamshire had refused. The Earl of Buckinghamshire never did refuse terms, because the business never came to the point of refusal, or acceptance; all that he did was, to receive the Russian project for a treaty of commerce, and to transmit it to England. This was in November, 1764; and he left Petersburg the January following,

before he could even receive an answer from his own court. The conclusion of the treaty fell to his successor. Whoever will be at the trouble to compare it with the treaty of 1734, will, I believe, confess, that, if the former ministers could have obtained such terms, they were criminal in not accepting them.

But the merchants 'deemed them unsafe and unprofitable.' What merchants? As no treaty ever was more maturely considered, so the opinion of the Russia merchants in London was all along taken; and all the instructions sent over were in exact conformity to that opinion. Our minister there made no step without having previously consulted our merchants resident in Petersburg, who, before the signing of the treaty, gave the most full and unanimous testimony in its favour. In their address to our minister at that court, among other things they say, 'It may afford some additional satisfaction to your Excellency, to receive a public acknowledgment of *the entire and unreserved approbation of every article* in this treaty, from us who are so immediately and so nearly concerned in its consequences.' This was signed by the consul-general, and every British merchant in Petersburg.

The approbation of those immediately concerned in the consequences is nothing to this author. He and his friends have so much tenderness for people's interests, and understand them so much better than they do themselves, that, whilst these politicians are contending for the best of possible terms, the claimants are obliged to go without any terms at all.

One of the first and justest complaints against the administration of the author's friends, was the want of vigour in their foreign negotiations. Their immediate successors endeavoured to correct that error, along with others; and there was scarcely a foreign

court, in which the new spirit that had arisen was not sensibly felt, acknowledged, and sometimes complained of. On their coming into administration, they found the demolition of Dunkirk entirely at a stand : instead of demolition, they found construction ; for the French were then at work on the repair of the jetties. On the remonstrances of General Conway, some parts of these jetties were immediately destroyed. The Duke of Richmond personally surveyed the place, and obtained a fuller knowledge of its true state and condition than any of our ministers had done ; and, in consequence, had larger offers from the Duke of Choiseul than had ever been received. But, as these were short of our just expectations under the treaty, he rejected them. Our then ministers, knowing that, in their administration, the people's minds were set at ease upon all the essential points of public and private liberty, and that no project of theirs could endanger the concord of the empire, were under no restraint from pursuing every just demand upon foreign nations.

The author, towards the end of this work, falls into reflections upon the state of public morals in this country : he draws use from this doctrine, by recommending his friend to the king and the public, as another Duke of Sully ; and he concludes the whole performance with a very devout prayer.

The prayers of politicians may sometimes be sincere ; and as this prayer is in substance, that the author, or his friends, may be soon brought into power, I have great reason to believe it is very much from the heart. It must be owned too that after he has drawn such a picture, such a shocking picture, of the state of this country, he has great faith in thinking the means he prays for sufficient to relieve us ; after the character he has given of its inhabitants of all ranks and classes, he has great charity in

caring much about them ; and indeed no less hope, in being of opinion, that such a detestable nation can ever become the care of Providence. He has not even found five good men in our devoted city.

He talks indeed of men of virtue and ability. But where are his *men* of virtue and ability to be found ? Are they in the present administration ? Never were a set of people more blackened by this author. Are they among the party of those (no small body) who adhere to the system of 1766 ? These it is the great purpose of this book to calumniate. Are they the persons who acted with his great friend, since the change in 1762, to his removal in 1765 ? Scarcely any of these are now out of employment ; and we are in possession of his desideratum. Yet I think he hardly means to select, even some of the highest of them, as examples fit for the reformation of a corrupt world.

He observes that the virtue of the most exemplary prince that ever swayed a sceptre ' can never warm or illuminate the body of his people, if foul mirrors are placed so near him as to refract and dissipate the rays at their first emanation.' Without observing upon the propriety of this metaphor, or asking how mirrors come to have lost their old quality of reflecting, and to have acquired that of refracting, and dissipating rays, and how far their foulness will account for this change ; the remark itself is common and true : no less true, and equally surprising from him, is that which immediately precedes it : ' It is in vain to endeavour to check the progress of irreligion and licentiousness, by punishing such crimes in *one individual*, if others equally culpable are rewarded with the honours and emoluments of the state.' I am not in the secret of the author's manner of writing ; but it appears to me, that he must intend these reflections as a satire upon the

administration of his happy years. Were ever the honours and emoluments of the state more lavishly squandered upon persons scandalous in their lives, than during that period? In these scandalous lives, was there anything more scandalous than the mode of punishing *one culpable individual*? In that individual, is anything more culpable than his having been seduced by the example of some of those very persons by whom he was thus persecuted?

The author is so eager to attack others, that he provides but indifferently for his own defence. I believe, without going beyond the page I have now before me, he is very sensible, that I have sufficient matter of further, and, if possible, of heavier charge against his friends, upon his own principle. But it is because the advantage is too great, that I decline making use of it. I wish the author had not thought that all methods are lawful in party. Above all he ought to have taken care not to wound his enemies through the sides of his country. This he has done, by making that monstrous and overcharged picture of the distresses of our situation. No wonder that he, who finds this country in the same condition with that of France at the time of Henry the Fourth, could also find a resemblance between his political friend and the Duke of Sully. As to those personal resemblances, people will often judge of them from their affections: they may imagine in these clouds whatsoever figures they please; but what is the conformation of that eye which can discover a resemblance of this country and these times to those with which the author compares them? France, a country just recovered out of twenty-five years of the most cruel and desolating civil war that perhaps was ever known. The kingdom, under the veil of momentary quiet, full of the most atrocious political, operating upon the most furious fanatical

factions. Some pretenders even to the crown ; and those who did not pretend to the whole, aimed at the partition of the monarchy. There were almost as many competitors as provinces ; and all abetted by the greatest, the most ambitious, and most enterprising power in Europe. No place safe from treason ; no, not the bosoms on which the most amiable prince that ever lived reposed his head ; not his mistresses ; not even his queen. As to the finances, they had scarce an existence, but as a matter of plunder to the managers, and of grants to insatiable and ungrateful courtiers.

How can our author have the heart to describe this as any sort of parallel to our situation ? To be sure an April shower has some resemblance to a water-spout ; for they are both wet : and there is some likeness between a summer evening's breeze and a hurricane ; they are both wind : but who can compare our disturbances, our situation, or our finances, to those of France in the time of Henry ? Great Britain is indeed at this time wearied, but not broken, with the efforts of a victorious foreign war ; not sufficiently relieved by an inadequate peace, but somewhat benefited by that peace, and infinitely by the consequences of that war. The powers of Europe awed by our victories, and lying in ruins upon every side of us. Burdened indeed we are with debt, but abounding with resources. We have a trade, not perhaps equal to our wishes, but more than ever we possessed. In effect, no pretender to the crown ; nor nutriment for such desperate and destructive factions as have formerly shaken this kingdom.

As to our finances, the author trifles with us. When Sully came to those of France, in what order was any part of the financial system ?, or what system was there at all ? There is no man in office who must not be sensible that ours is, without the act of

any parading minister, the most regular and orderly system perhaps that was ever known ; the best secured against all frauds in the collection, and all misapplication in the expenditure of public money.

I admit that, in this flourishing state of things, there are appearances enough to excite uneasiness and apprehension. I admit there is a cankerworm in the rose :

medio de fonte leporum

Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.

This is nothing else than a spirit of disconnection, of distrust, and of treachery among public men. It is no accidental evil, nor has its effect been trusted to the usual frailty of nature ; the distemper has been inoculated. The author is sensible of it, and we lament it together. This distemper is alone sufficient to take away considerably from the benefits of our constitution and situation, and perhaps to render their continuance precarious. If these evil dispositions should spread much farther, they must end in our destruction ; for nothing can save a people destitute of public and private faith. However, the author, for the present state of things, has extended the charge by much too widely ; as men are but too apt to take the measure of all mankind from their own particular acquaintance. Barren as this age may be in the growth of honour and virtue, the country does not want, at this moment, as strong, and those not a few examples, as were ever known of an unshaken adherence to principle, and attachment to connection, against every allurements of interest. Those examples are not furnished by the great alone ; nor by those, whose activity in public affairs may render it suspected that they make such a character one of the rounds in their ladder of ambition ; but by men more quiet, and more in the shade, on whom an unmixed sense of honour alone could

operate. Such examples indeed are not furnished in great abundance amongst those who are the subjects of the author's panegyric. He must look for them in another camp. He who complains of the ill effects of a divided and heterogeneous administration, is not justifiable in labouring to render odious in the eyes of the public those men, whose principles, whose maxims of policy, and whose personal character can alone administer a remedy to this capital evil of the age : neither is he consistent with himself, in constantly extolling those whom he knows to be the authors of the very mischief of which he complains, and which the whole nation feels so deeply.

The persons who are the objects of his dislike and complaint are many of them of the first families, and weightiest properties, in the kingdom ; but infinitely more distinguished for their untainted honour, public and private, and their zealous, but sober attachment to the constitution of their country, than they can be by any birth, or any station. If they are the friends of any one great man rather than another, it is not that they make his aggrandizement the end of their union ; or because they know him to be the most active in caballing for his connections the largest and speediest emoluments. It is because they know him, by personal experience, to have wise and enlarged ideas of the public good, and an invincible constancy in adhering to it ; because they are convinced, by the whole tenor of his actions, that he will never negotiate away their honour or his own : and that, in or out of power, change of situation will make no alteration in his conduct. This will give to such a person in such a body, an authority and respect that no minister ever enjoyed among his venal dependents, in the highest plenitude of his power ; such as ser-

vility never can give, such as ambition never can receive or relish.

This body will often be reproached by their adversaries, for want of ability in their political transactions; they will be ridiculed for missing many favourable conjunctures, and not profiting of several brilliant opportunities of fortune; but they must be contented to endure that reproach; for they cannot acquire the reputation of *that kind* of ability without losing all the other reputation they possess.

They will be charged too with a dangerous spirit of exclusion and proscription, for being unwilling to mix in schemes of administration, which have no bond of union, or principle of confidence. That charge too they must suffer with patience. If the reason of the thing had not spoken loudly enough, the miserable examples of the several administrations constructed upon the idea of systematic discord would be enough to frighten them from such monstrous and ruinous conjunctions. It is however false, that the idea of an united administration carries with it that of a proscription of any other party. It does indeed imply the necessity of having the great strongholds of government in well united hands, in order to secure the predominance of right and uniform principles; of having the capital offices of deliberation and execution of those who can deliberate with mutual confidence, and who will execute what is resolved with firmness and fidelity. If this system cannot be rigorously adhered to in practice (and what system can be so?), it ought to be the constant aim of good men to approach as nearly to it as possible. No system of that kind can be formed, which will not leave room fully sufficient for healing coalitions: but no coalition, which, under the specious name of independency, carries in its bosom the unreconciled

principles of the original discord of parties, ever was, or will be, an healing coalition. Nor will the mind of our sovereign ever know repose, his kingdom settlement, or his business order, efficiency, or grace with his people, until things are established upon the basis of some set of men, who are trusted by the public, and who can trust one another.

This comes rather nearer to the mark than the author's description of a proper administration, under the name of *men of ability and virtue*, which conveys no definite idea at all ; nor does it apply specifically to our grand national distemper. All parties pretend to these qualities. The present ministry, no favourites of the author, will be ready enough to declare themselves persons of virtue and ability ; and if they choose a vote for that purpose, perhaps it would not be quite impossible for them to procure it. But, if the disease be this distrust and disconnection, it is easy to know who are sound and who are tainted ; who are fit to restore us to health, who to continue, and to spread the contagion. The present ministry being made up of draughts from all parties in the kingdom, if they should profess any adherence to the connections they have left, they must convict themselves of the blackest treachery. They therefore choose rather to renounce the principle itself, and to brand it with the name of pride and faction. This test with certainty discriminates the opinions of men. The other is a description vague and unsatisfactory.

As to the unfortunate gentlemen who may at any time compose that system, which, under the plausible title of an administration, subsists but for the establishment of weakness and confusion ; they fall into different classes, with different merits. I think the situation of some people in that state may deserve a certain degree of compassion ; at the same

time that they furnish an example, which, it is to be hoped, by being a severe one, will have its effect, at least, on the growing generation ; if an original seduction, on plausible but hollow pretences, into loss of honour, friendship, consistency, security, and repose, can furnish it. It is possible to draw, even from the very prosperity of ambition, examples of terror, and motives to compassion.

I believe the instances are exceedingly rare of men immediately passing over a clear, marked line of virtue into declared vice and corruption. There are a sort of middle tints and shades between the two extremes ; there is something uncertain on the confines of the two empires which they first pass through, and which renders the change easy and imperceptible. There are even a sort of splendid impositions so well contrived, that, at the very time the path of rectitude is quitted for ever, men seem to be advancing into some higher and nobler road of public conduct. Not that such impositions are strong enough in themselves ; but a powerful interest, often concealed from those whom it affects, works at the bottom, and secures the operation. Men are thus debauched away from those legitimate connections, which they had formed on a judgment, early perhaps, but sufficiently mature, and wholly unbiassed. They do not quit them upon any ground of complaint, for grounds of just complaint may exist, but upon the flattering and most dangerous of all principles, that of mending what is well. Gradually they are habituated to other company ; and a change in their habitudes soon makes a way for a change in their opinions. Certain persons are no longer so very frightful, when they come to be known and to be serviceable. As to their old friends, the transition is easy ; from friendship to civility ;

from civility to enmity : few are the steps from dereliction to persecution.

People not very well grounded in the principles of public morality find a set of maxims in office ready made for them, which they assume as naturally and inevitably, as any of the insignia or instruments of the situation. A certain tone of the solid and practical is immediately acquired. Every former profession of public spirit is to be considered as a debauch of youth, or, at best, as a visionary scheme of unattainable perfection. The very idea of consistency is exploded. The convenience of the business of the day is to furnish the principle for doing it. Then the whole ministerial cant is quickly got by heart. The prevalence of faction is to be lamented. All opposition is to be regarded as the effect of envy and disappointed ambition. All administrations are declared to be alike. The same necessity justifies all their measures. It is no longer a matter of discussion, who or what administration is ; but that administration is to be supported, is a general maxim. Flattering themselves that their power is become necessary to the support of all order and government ; everything which tends to the support of that power is sanctified, and becomes a part of the public interest.

Growing every day more formed to affairs, and better knit in their limbs, when the occasion (now the only rule) requires it, they become capable of sacrificing those very persons to whom they had before sacrificed their original friends. It is now only in the ordinary course of business to alter an opinion, or to betray a connection. Frequently relinquishing one set of men and adopting another, they grow into a total indifference to human feeling, as they had before to moral obligation ; until at length, no one original impression remains

upon their minds : every principle is obliterated ; every sentiment effaced.

In the mean time, that power, which all these changes aimed at securing, remains still as tottering and as uncertain as ever. They are delivered up into the hands of those who feel neither respect for their persons, nor gratitude for their favours ; who are put about them in appearance to serve, in reality to govern them ; and, when the signal is given, to abandon and destroy them in order to set up some new dupe of ambition, who in his turn is to be abandoned and destroyed. Thus living in a state of continual uneasiness and ferment, softened only by the miserable consolation of giving now and then preferments to those for whom they have no value ; they are unhappy in their situation, yet find it impossible to resign. Until, at length, soured in temper, and disappointed by the very attainment of their ends, in some angry, in some haughty, or some negligent moment, they incur the displeasure of those upon whom they have rendered their very being dependent. Then *perierunt tempora longi servitii* ; they are cast off with scorn ; they are turned out, emptied of all natural character, of all intrinsic worth, of all essential dignity, and deprived of every consolation of friendship. Having rendered all retreat to old principles ridiculous, and to old regards impracticable, not being able to counterfeit pleasure, or to discharge discontent, nothing being sincere, or right, or balanced in their minds, it is more than a chance, that, in a delirium of the last stage of their distempered power, they make an insane political testament, by which they throw all their remaining weight and consequence into the scale of their declared enemies, and the avowed authors of their destruction. Thus they finish their course. Had it been possible that the

whole, or even a great part of these effects on their minds, I say nothing of the effect upon their fortunes, could have appeared to them in their first departure from the right line, it is certain they would have rejected every temptation with horror. The principle of these remarks, like every good principle in morality, is trite ; but its frequent application is not the less necessary.

As so others, who are plain practical men, they have been guiltless at all times of all public pretence. Neither the author nor any one else has reason to be angry with them. They belonged to his friend for their interest ; for their interest they quitted him ; and when it is their interest, he may depend upon it, they will return to their former connection. Such people subsist at all times, and, though the nuisance of all, are at no time a worthy subject of discussion. It is false virtue and plausible error that do the mischief.

If men come to government with right dispositions, they have not that unfavourable subject which this author represents to work upon. Our circumstances are indeed critical ; but then they are the critical circumstances of a strong and mighty nation. If corruption and meanness are greatly spread, they are not spread universally. Many public men are hitherto examples of public spirit and integrity. Whole parties, as far as large bodies can be uniform, have preserved character. However they may be deceived in some particulars, I know of no set of men amongst us, which does not contain persons on whom the nation, in a difficult exigence, may well value itself. Private life, which is the nursery of the commonwealth, is yet in general pure, and on the whole disposed to virtue ; and the people at large want neither generosity nor spirit. No small part of that very luxury, which

is so much the subject of the author's declamation, but which, in most parts of life, by being well balanced and diffused, is only decency and convenience, has perhaps as many, or more good than evil consequences attending it. It certainly excites industry, nourishes emulation, and inspires some sense of personal value into all ranks of people. What we want is to establish more fully an opinion of uniformity, and consistency of character, in the leading men of the state ; such as will restore some confidence to profession and appearance, such as will fix subordination upon esteem. Without this, all schemes are begun at the wrong end. All who join in them are liable to their consequences. All men who, under whatever pretext, take a part in the formation or the support of systems constructed in such a manner as must, in their nature, disable them from the execution of their duty, have made themselves guilty of all the present distraction, and of the future ruin, which they may bring upon their country.

It is a serious affair, this studied disunion in government. In cases where union is most consulted in the constitution of a ministry, and where persons are best disposed to promote it, differences, from the various ideas of men, will arise ; and from their passions will often ferment into violent heats, so as greatly to disorder all public business. What must be the consequence, when the very distemper is made the basis of the constitution ; and the original weakness of human nature is still further enfeebled by art and contrivance ? It must subvert government from the very foundation. It turns our public councils into the most mischievous cabals ; where the consideration is, not how the nation's business shall be carried on, but how those who ought to

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carry on small circumvent each other. In such a state of things, no order, uniformity, dignity, or effect, can appear in our proceedings, either at home or abroad. Nor will it make much difference, whether some of the constituent parts of such an administration are men of virtue or ability, or not; supposing it possible that such men, with their eyes open, should choose to make a part in such a body.

The effects of all human contrivances are in the hand of Providence. I do not like to answer, as our author so readily does, for the event of any speculation. But surely the nature of our disorders, if anything, must indicate the proper remedy. Men who act steadily on the principles I have stated may in all events be very serviceable to their country; in one case, by furnishing (if their sovereign should be so advised) an administration formed upon ideas very different from those which have for some time been unfortunately fashionable. But, if this should not be the case, they may be still serviceable; for the example of a large body of men, steadily sacrificing ambition to principle, can never be without use. It will certainly be prolific, and draw others to an imitation. *Vera gloria radices agit, atque etiam propagatur.*

I do not think myself of consequence enough to imitate my author, in troubling the world with the prayers or wishes I may form for the public: full as little am I disposed to imitate his professions; those professions are long since worn out in the political service. If the work will not speak for the author, his own declarations deserve but little credit.

